



A WILL ETERNAL

BOOK 03

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A Will Eternal

(一念永恒)

by

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Synopsis

One will to ceate oceans. One will to summon the mulberry fields.

One will to slaughter countless devils. One will to eradicate innumerable immortals.

Only my will... is eternal.

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Book 3: Rise of the River-Defying Sect!

Chapter 327: Cultivation Base Breakthrough!

The Heavenspan Sea occupied the very center of the world. It was a vast, boundless body of golden water that not even Nascent Soul cultivators would dare to enter without some sort of magical device designed for sea travel.

Only people in the Deva Realm could possibly make an attempt at crossing the sea, and with difficulty at that.

In the east, west, south and north regions of the Heavenspan Sea, there were places where the sea water poured through openings that created four enormous rivers. Although those rivers didn't reach the very borders of the world, they did come close.

Each of the four great rivers had a riversource sect at the base of the river, in the location where the sea and the river met. The sect which controlled the eastern river was the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. After the river flowed for a certain distance, it split up into four smaller branches of the same river.

The locations where those four rivers branched off came to be known as the Middle Reaches of the cultivation world. Those locations were home to the Starry River Court, the Sky River Court, the Dao River Court, and the Polarity River Court!

Those four sects were deserving of the domineering reputation they maintained in the eastern Middle Reaches of the cultivation world. Any one of them was powerful enough to completely

dominate the other smaller sects in the region, as well as the vast number of cultivator clans.

Although each river branch that formed the Lower Reaches was occupied by four powerful sects, even if those sects combined forces, they wouldn't be a match for one of the larger sects that occupied the Middle Reaches. However, there was only one reason for that!

The patriarchs of the Lower Reaches sects were all Nascent Soul cultivators, whereas the patriarchs of the Middle Reaches sects were in the Deva Realm!

The Deva Realm was something completely different from the Nascent Soul stage. It was an almost unimaginable level of power, and the difference between it and Nascent Soul was even greater than the difference between Nascent Soul and Gold Core!

It was almost impossible to even fathom the disparity!

Because of the threat of such power, none of the sects in the Lower Reaches would ever dream of trying to topple a Middle Reaches sect, not unless some heaven-defying event occurred. Furthermore, the chances of one of the Nascent Soul cultivators from the Lower Reaches breaking through to become a deva were miniscule.

Even people who overflowed with latent talent would be hard-pressed to find an opportunity to do so. The reason for that was because in the Lower Reaches, the spiritual power of the

Heavenspan River was different, the resources were different, and the techniques were different. An even bigger reason was that Deva Tribulation was virtually impossible to transcend without a Dharma protector!

However, the biggest reason was that the Middle Reaches sects would never let one of their subordinates in the Lower Reaches produce a deva! That would be a threat to their own positions!

However, none of that applied in this situation. An exceedingly rare opportunity had arisen with the Sky River Court.

For some unknown reason, the Sky River Court had done something to enrage the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. As a result, two devas had been sent to execute judgement on the Sky River Court's Deva Realm patriarch. Supposedly, they had even extracted part of his soul to create something that was rarely ever seen in the world, and very valuable: a deva soul.

In addition to that, more than seventy percent of the Sky River Court cultivators had been put to death, and that included portions of the reserve powers and precious treasures.

If they had wanted to, they could have simply exterminated the entire Sky River Court. Instead, they had issued an important ruling allowing it to stay in place!

By allowing the Sky River Court to survive, they had created the spark which led to the war among the four subordinate sects in the Lower Reaches.

By leaving the severely weakened Sky River Court in place, they provided an enticing goal for the Lower Reaches sects. Of course, the Sky River Court wouldn't just sit around waiting to be supplanted. If they could survive the assault of the Lower Reaches sects, then according to the stipulations of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, they would have a chance to continue to exist!

If they managed to raise another of their cultivators to the Deva Realm in the future, then they might be able to return to their previous level of glory.

It wasn't that they weren't aware that the four sects had ended up joining forces. They did know, and yet, didn't dare to interfere. According to the rules set forth by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, they weren't allowed to meddle with the affairs of the Lower Reaches sects. They had no choice but to sit still and await the final punishment which had been arranged by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

That punishment was none other than the invasion of the Lower Reaches sects!

The sect headquarters of the Sky River Court was built atop the Heavenspan River itself. It was ten times larger than any sect in the Lower Reaches; after all, it was almost impossible to see one side of the river from the other in this area.

Much further down the river from that location was where it split into four more branches, which was the Lower Reaches of the

cultivation world.

On the first of those four branches, it was possible to see an enormous giant plodding along, half-submerged in the river water. Every step the giant took sent water surging and spraying about, and the countless vicious spirits and other vile creatures nearby fleeing for their lives.

Even the most powerful of entities which lived in the river would choose to hide in the face of the power they felt, and would simply allow the giant to pass by.

Occasionally, it was possible to see a rabbit flitting about on the shoulders of the giant.

Some distance behind the giant was a 300,000-meter-long Heavenspan Battleship, slicing through the water. Countless cultivators could be seen on the battleship, most of them seated cross-legged in meditation as they attempted to get themselves into peak readiness for the fighting to come. A somber and solemn aura surrounded the entire battleship.

Two more battleships could be seen further back in the river, one of them 210,000 meters long, the other 90,000 meters. They seemed just as solemn as the first battleship.

Bai Xiaochun had converged the consciousnesses of numerous powerful cultivators to take control of the Blood Ancestor. His eyes shone with bright light as he strode through the river water. He could sense the vastness of the world around him, and to him, the

water bashing against him felt soft and gentle. He couldn't help but feel a grand sense of wonderment.

“One day, I won't need to use the body of the Blood Ancestor to get this exact same feeling!” With that, he took another step forward, moving thousands of meters in the process.

Based on the speed of the Blood Ancestor and the Heavenspan Battleships, it only took a few days for them to pass unobstructed through the river until they reached the spot where it connected to the larger river upstream!

Stretching out to the horizon was a massive river that only the patriarchs had ever seen during their formal visits to the Sky River Court every sixty-year-cycle. For the other cultivators, it was their first time ever seeing a river this big; it was ten times wider than the Heavenspan River they were used to.

“The Middle Reaches Heavenspan River!!”

“Is this the Heavenspan River? It's so huge!!”

“Compared to this river, ours really is nothing more than a stream!” The cultivators of the three divisions on the Heavenspan Battleships could immediately sense that the spiritual energy of heaven and earth here was ten times stronger than that which existed in the Lower Reaches.

Many people took in deep breaths, whereupon cracking sounds

could be heard coming from inside of them. They had never encountered spiritual energy this strong, and for many, it immediately allowed them to break through cultivation obstacles that had hindered them in the past.

“This... this is the Middle Reaches! My cultivation base....”

“The only way to take over the Sky River Court is to defeat them in battle. If I continue to cultivate here, I’ll definitely be able to reach the level of a Nascent Soul patriarch!!”

Even the patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect were panting in excitement. In fact, their feelings ran even deeper than the other cultivators, because they were finally closing in on their ultimate goal: becoming devas!

If they could put down roots in the Middle Reaches, the resources and spiritual power there would make the Deva Realm more than just a distant dream. Furthermore, no one from above would come to interfere as they reached the breakthrough point; after all, having a Deva Realm expert was one of the main requirements for Middle Reaches sects!

Bai Xiaochun could sense the excitement of the patriarchs. As he controlled the body of the Blood Ancestor, he took a deep breath, and everything in heaven and earth shook. A massive surge of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth raced toward him, as he became like a black hole. After the spiritual energy entered the body of the Blood Ancestor, he sent it out to the cultivators of the Blood Stream Division, and then took a bit for himself.

His ninth spiritual sea had previously been just on the verge of crystallizing. As of this moment, it only took that single breath to finish the process!

The instant it fully crystallized, Bai Xiaochun trembled as his cultivation base erupted with power vastly greater than before.

After nine spiritual seas fully crystallized, that was the great circle of Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment!

“The Middle Reaches....” he thought, brimming with excitement. All of a sudden, he felt as if he were connected by destiny to the Middle Reaches; if not, why else would he have made a breakthrough the instant he entered...?

Despite being inside of the Blood Ancestor, he was still able to suck in spiritual energy without any wastage. It seemed boundless.

Eyes flickering, he sent the Blood Ancestor leaping forward. Massive rumbling could be heard as the Blood Ancestor flew through the air and then splashed down into the river that was the eastern Heavenspan!

RUMBLE!

Water splashed everywhere, and huge waves rolled out. It was in that moment that the three Heavenspan Battleships also burst out into the Middle Reaches!

Chapter 328: Dire Skybanyan!

Bai Xiaochun felt truly free and unrestricted as he sent the Blood Ancestor up into the Middle Reaches. By this point, he could control the body of the Blood Ancestor with complete agility and dexterity.

The river began to get deeper, and soon it was up to the chest of the Blood Ancestor.

As for the three Heavenspan Battleships, because of the abundance of spiritual energy, they were able to move more quickly, making it easier for them to keep up with the giant.

Rumbling echoed out from the Heavenspan River as the group proceeded on upstream.

It was at this point that the patriarchs of the three divisions issued orders, and the enormous sails of the battleships were unfurled. Upon each sail could be seen three shining, golden characters!

River-Defying Sect!!

This was the first time that the name of the River-Defying Sect had been announced in the Middle Reaches of the cultivation world. As the wind caused the sails to flap, the words looked particularly impressive!

The patriarchs of all four divisions had agreed to do this ahead of time. Back then, the arch-patriarch Master Godwind hadn't been completely sure that the plan with the Blood Ancestor would work. Therefore, the plan was to use the three Heavenspan Battleships, not just to transport the members of the sect, but also to impress and awe those who saw them.

It was an attempt to threaten anyone who harbored thoughts of trying to carve out their own spheres of power in the territory currently controlled by the Sky River Court.

Clearly, this method was working!

The cultivation world of the Middle Reaches was far larger in area than the Lower Reaches. Considering that all of the Lower Reaches was simply one part of the territory controlled by the dominant Middle Reaches sect, it was possible to imagine how large of an area that was.

Occasionally, smaller sects and cultivator clans were visible on the shores of the river. Clearly, such organizations had unique relationships with the Sky River Court to be permitted to establish themselves so close to the river itself.

Normally, they were a proud and arrogant lot, comfortable in their respected position within the Middle Reaches. As for the Lower Reaches, they looked down on them with disdain.

But now that the Sky River Court was being punished, such organizations were getting more and more nervous. Then they saw

the three Heavenspan Battleships, and their eyes went wide. They were struck with fear and awe, and could scarcely believe what they were seeing. And that was without even mentioning the enormous giant that led the way for the battleships.

“They’re the River-Defying Sect?”

“They come from the Lower Reaches....”

“They’re going to attack the Sky River Court in the hopes of replacing it!!” The cultivator clans and small-scale sects were all trembling in nervousness, completely shaken by what they were seeing!

Once the battleships and the giant made their way off into the distance, the cultivator clans and small-scale sects immediately sent word to others that they knew in the Middle Reaches. Before long, everyone was shaken, and even the Courts on the other rivers became aware of what was happening.

Of the other sects and clans in the territory of the Sky River Court, some were terrified and some were nervous. However, there were some who merely narrowed their bloodshot eyes, as if they were trying to decide what to do.

However, other groups which had never been treated very well, especially groups more on the borders of the Sky River Court territory, quickly made up their minds.

“This is an opportunity for the River-Defying Sect, but it’s also an opportunity for our Zhoushi Clan!”

“We can show up in the River-Defying Sect’s moment of greatest need. If we join them in attacking the Sky River Court, the merit we earn in battle will be a protection for our clan. It will buy us at least 1,000 years of stability!!”

“Let’s risk it! If we don’t attack now, the heavens only know when we might get another chance!”

Before long, the entire Sky River Court territory was in a huge commotion as numerous organizations began to head in the direction of the Sky River Court’s headquarters.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun’s progress up the Heavenspan River had slowed some. This was a decision made by the patriarchs of the four divisions. As far as they were concerned, it wouldn’t make any difference if they arrived at the Sky River Court a day earlier or a day later.

Besides, they wanted to wait for news of the River-Defying Sect to spread in the area. That way, any sects or clans who wished to join them would have time to make their decision. Furthermore, any who were on the fence would have a chance to make their way to the area near the Sky River Court to observe how things played out.

By waiting until the right moment to strike at the Sky River Court, they would be able to maximize the benefits of winning!

When Bai Xiaochun heard their plan, he couldn't help but sigh. Clearly, the patriarchs were making a gamble. However, he knew that all of them were profound at scheming and planning, and were the slyest of sly foxes.

When they all got together to plan, they would hash things out to the finest detail.

At one point, the patriarchs of the other three divisions gathered on the shoulders of the Blood Ancestor. As they sat there cross-legged, Master Godwind materialized in illusory form on the Blood Ancestor's ear to confer with them. "Our attack on the Sky River Court will encompass three major offensives!"

Restrictive spells were cast to ensure that no one would eavesdrop.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked askance at the ant-like forms on his shoulders, and couldn't help but feel a bit annoyed.

"The first offensive will be via the water! This assault must be lightning-swift, and we must achieve victory as soon as possible. Only in that way can we impress the cultivator clans and the other sects, and give them the confidence to join us!"

"That's right. The second offensive will be through the jungle! The Sky River Court is enormous, and is surrounded by jungle on either side. The fighting will be bitter, and the main goal will be to reach the Sky River Court headquarters!"

“Heh heh. So what you’re saying is that the third offensive will be on the sect headquarters itself!”

“Yes. But the most difficult part of the final offensive won’t be dealing with the cultivators of the Sky River Court. It will be the Dire Skybanyan, which feeds on the flesh and blood of 1,000,000 cultivators every hundred years! The Sky River Court’s deva patriarch might have perished, but according to our intelligence reports, their Dire Skybanyan is still very much alive. Furthermore, its power is similar to that of a deva....”

As the patriarchs discussed their plans, Bai Xiaochun listened in, heart pounding with shock. When he heard them mention the Dire Skybanyan, he couldn’t help but be intrigued.

Time passed. Half a month later, the first of the cultivator clans presented themselves to the River-Defying Sect on the bank of the river, and declared their allegiance!

They would join the River-Defying Sect in attacking the Sky River Court!

These organizations who didn’t feel the need to wait and see how the fighting went before joining were taken very seriously by the River-Defying Sect. Although they weren’t invited to board the battleships, they were promised many benefits in the future.

In the following days, more organizations appeared to offer allegiance. Another half a month passed, and by that time, 30

cultivator clans and five small-scale sects had joined the alliance with the River-Defying Sect.

As they got closer to the Sky River Court, this trend influenced many of the other organizations, and became a major factor in their own decisions.

By this point, the River-Defying Sect felt that they were ready. With that, they pushed forward at full speed. Rumbling could be heard as the Blood Ancestor flew through the Heavenspan River, slicing through the water, followed by the three Heavenspan Battleships.

A few days later, the members of the River-Defying Sect finally caught sight of something astonishing up ahead on the river. It was a gigantic tree that reached high up into the sky, and actually connected both banks of the river!

It was an enormous banyan tree that was called a skybanyan!

The tree had lived for many, many years, and was tens of thousands of meters tall. Its roots were buried into both banks of the river, with rootlets dangling down to brush the surface of the water below. Many of the rootlets had grown together in clumps, creating walkways for people to tread upon. The entire sight was completely shocking!

The roots which sank into the banks of the river actually formed countless smaller skybanyans, almost like children to the mother that was the enormous larger tree. Because they were all connected

together, they were like a huge jungle!

That jungle fairly radiated an aura of blood and gore. It was like an enormous graveyard, something which was nurtured by the power of flesh and blood.

That was because skybanyans were trees that loved to feast on skin and gore!

Although the patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect had already spread word about the skybanyans, when the members of the sect saw them with their own eyes, they couldn't help but be shaken mentally.

The main tree radiated an aura of death, and many of its branches and limbs were withered, as were many of the smaller trees in the disorganized jungle which surrounded it.

Even more astonishing was that in the middle of the trunk of the main tree, an enormous handprint could be seen, as if a palm strike had been delivered with the intention of destroying it!

Clearly, the Dire Skybanyan, despite not being dead, was panting on the verge of passing away. Even still, the scant bit of power that it still retained was enough to threaten everything in the area!

The Sky River Court was a place that abounded with a sinister air. Currently, not a single cultivator was visible in the area, and yet it was possible to detect glares of hatred falling upon the River-

Defying Sect from within the skybanyans. Most of those gazes were leveled on Bai Xiaochun and the Blood Ancestor.

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Chapter 329: Attacking The Sky River Court

In the moment that the Blood Ancestor and the three Heavenspan Battleships appeared in front of the headquarters of the Sky River Court, the entire Heavenspan River seemed to go quiet.

At first no one from either side said a thing. They only looked at each other, gazes burning with killing intent.

Whether it was the Sky River Court or the River-Defying Sect, neither could be considered in the right or in the wrong.

As the silence wore on, an intense pressure built up until the air itself seemed to solidify. At the same time, numerous organizations that existed within the territory of the Sky River Court were all watching to see what would happen.

After a long moment, an illusory version of the Blood Stream arch-patriarch appeared out in the open. Facing the Sky River Court, he clasped hands and bowed deeply. “I, Master Godwind, offer greetings to the presiding sect!”

Next, the Spirit Stream founding patriarch appeared in person. Bowing, he said, “I, Frigidsect, offer greetings to the presiding sect!”

After him were the strongest patriarchs from the Profound and Pill Stream Divisions. Their expressions were wistful as they clasped hands and offered formal greetings.

“I, Crimson soul, offer greetings to the presiding sect!”

“I, Sieve pill, offer greetings to the presiding sect!”

At first, the Sky River Court maintained silence. Of the countless gazes emanating from the Dire Skybanyan, many were filled with mixed emotions. After a long moment passed, a hoarse voice echoed out.

“Master Godwind, Frigid sect, Crimson soul, Sieve pill. It’s been a long time, Fellow Daoists....” As the voice filled the air, an old man emerged from the Sky River Court, hovering tall and straight. He had long white hair, and a malicious air to him. Especially terrifying was the fact that, on the left side of his face, he had a huge growth of flesh the size of an infant’s head.

Eight people appeared along with him, just behind him; shockingly, each one was a Nascent Soul cultivator. The strongest of them all was the old man, who was clearly in the great circle, and even had a bit of a Heaven-Dao aura to him. Given enough time, that old man would most likely be able to reach the Deva Realm.

The old man flashed a bitter smile. Eyes filled with profound ancientness, he said, “This fight doesn’t need a lengthy preamble. I know that you have come to offer greetings today because of the judgement set forth by the presiding sect. There is no right or wrong here today, at least, not that exists between our two sects....

“However, there is one thing that I’m certain of. And that is...” As the man spoke, mixed emotions could be seen on his face. His voice grew softer and softer, until Master Godwind and the other patriarchs were straining to hear what he said. However, in that very moment, a crimson eyeball suddenly opened on the tumor on the side of his face, and it radiated venomous hatred and madness. Then the old man shouted, “... you people will all die here today!!”

Even as the words left his mouth, the air around the three Heavenspan Battleships began to twist and distort as tens of thousands of people materialized. All sorts of cultivation bases were present. However, each and every person was extremely fast, and was adept at using spatial manipulation magic. In the blink of an eye, they were already attacking the battleships.

Even more such figures appeared in the vicinity of the patriarchs, and those figures’ murderous auras were especially intense!

Clearly, the Sky River Court was attempting to take advantage of the River-Defying Sect’s moment of unpreparedness to launch a sneak attack, and hopefully, seize the upper hand!

However, in the very moment that the Sky River Court’s cultivators attacked, rumbling echoed out as an enormous sword materialized. Almost as soon as it appeared, it divided into tens of thousands of smaller greatswords which slashed through the air toward the Dire Skybanyan!

This was the Profound Stream Division’s sword formation, which normally took a significant amount of time to prepare. The fact that it had suddenly appeared right here and now indicated

that the four patriarchs' politeness earlier had just been for show!

This was a situation of fighting viciousness with ferocity! This was a war that would determine the fate of two sects, and there was no room for righteousness or morality. Any such weakness would come at a bitter price!

Rumbling booms filled the air as shields of light sprang up around the Heavenspan Battleships, completely blocking the attacks of the Sky River Court cultivators and preventing them from advancing toward the ships. Simultaneously, blood-colored light erupted from the Blood Ancestor, protecting the patriarchs.

In the direction of the Sky River Court, the Dire Skybanyan began to glitter with light, and then countless leaves flew out to block the sword formation. The mutual sneak attacks launched by both sides had failed to secure the upper hand for either one of them. Neither sect was showing any consideration for the other, nor was anyone interested in having a discussion. The fighting had begun!

Countless vine-like branches shot out from the Skybanyan like vicious, bloodthirsty snakes. Accompanying them were numerous cultivators, almost blurs as they shot through the air toward the River-Defying Sect.

The Sky River Court cultivators were skilled with spatial manipulation magic, and were far faster than ordinary cultivators. Furthermore, they were very skilled at concealing themselves. The truth was that in the Middle Reaches of the cultivation world, the Sky River Court was known for being able to kill anyone,

anywhere!

It was even correct to say that the Sky River Court was a sect of assassins!

In the blink of an eye, more than ten thousand Sky River Court cultivators appeared, blotting out the sky as they unleashed deadly attacks. They flitted through the air as if they were performing teleportations; almost as soon as they became visible, they would vanish to another spot.

This was the first time that the River-Defying Sect was facing such techniques, and that gave the Sky River court a clear advantage!

Then there were the vines, which brimmed with astonishing strength as they screamed through the air. At the same time, numerous smaller skybanyans on the two banks of the river emerged from the ground and transformed into treants. Howling, they launched themselves out over the Heavenspan River toward the River-Defying Sect.

Some of the treants were dozens of meters tall, some of them were hundreds of meters tall. In each and every one of them, Sky River Court cultivators could be seen, sitting there meditating as they unleashed power to control the treants' shocking strength.

Even as the Sky River Court forces charged forth, Bai Xiaochun sent the Blood Ancestor leaping up into the air. As a result, massive waves rolled out across the surface of the Heavenspan River water.

Many of the Sky River Court cultivators were simply impeded by the waves, but others who didn't evade them quickly enough screamed miserably as they were inundated and then melted by the water.

How could the Sky River Court possibly ignore the fact that the Blood Ancestor had just leaped up into the air? The truth was that the Blood Ancestor was actually the focal point of this fight. Instantly, countless vines shot out from the numerous skybanyans, which flew through the air and began to wrap around the Blood Ancestor.

Those vines emanated shocking strength, and were backed by the will of the Dire Skybanyan itself.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered with cold light. Without the slightest hesitation, he unleashed all of his blood qi, viciously waving his right hand and snapping all of the vines. Bai Xiaochun was well aware that his mission in this battle was to neutralize the Dire Skybanyan!

As he proceeded forward toward the enormous tree, more and more vines snaked out, speeding toward him with wild abandon as they attempted to impede his progress.

At the same time, the 300,000-meter-long Heavenspan Battleship shot forward, glittering with the light of spell formations as countless giants rose up on its deck. Roaring, the giants leaped out to fight with the Sky River Court cultivators.

A similar thing occurred with the second battleship. A vast host of puppets flew out, smashing into the forces of the Sky River Court.

More sword formations appeared up in the sky, and then a rain of swords began to fall. Then came the Pill Stream Division. An enormous cauldron materialized up in the air, which began to bathe everything in the area with soft light.

There was something toxic about the light, and any Sky River Court cultivator who it touched began to shake violently. In contrast, the River-Defying Sect cultivators who the light touched felt their cultivation bases rising and their wounds being healed.

Chen Manyao's voice rang out as she gave orders to the Pill Stream Division, and toxic gas immediately began to spread toward the enemy.

In the blink of an eye, massive rumbling sounds rose up to the heavens.

Up in the air, the patriarchs from all four divisions began to fight with the Nascent Soul cultivators from the Sky River Court. Booms rang out. In the initial fighting, it wasn't clear which side had the upper hand among the patriarchs. Although the Sky River Court was outnumbered, the old man who was half a step into the Deva Realm actually gave them a bit of an advantage.

The prime elders, legacy echelon cultivators, and Gold Core experts of the River-Defying Sect formed the backbone of the

army. They outnumbered the Sky River Court, and thanks to their constant attacks, the Sky River Court's Gold Core cultivators were suffering one defeat after another!

If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. But then, the three Heavenspan Battleships erupted with blinding light, beams of destruction fully 300 meters wide.

The power source for the beams of light were the skeletal parts of the Deva Realm beast that formed their keels. As the light shot forth, rumbling sounds filled the air, and any Sky River Court cultivator who got in the way was instantly transformed into ash.

The target of those destructive beams of light was none other than the Dire Skybanyan!

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Chapter 330: Locking Down the Dire Skybanyan!

For the River-Defying Sect, there was one key to this battle.

The Dire Skybanyan!

The attacks from the Heavenspan Battleships had one purpose: to clear the way for Bai Xiaochun to reach the Dire Skybanyan.

The three beams of light cut through everything like razor-sharp knives slicing through bamboo. When they slammed into the Dire Skybanyan, the tree trembled and let out a bitter cry that caused blood to ooze out of the mouths of any cultivators in the vicinity.

However, it didn't affect the Blood Ancestor at all. Under Bai Xiaochun's control, the Blood Ancestor leaped high into the air to appear directly in front of the ancient skybanyan. Then, a giant fist formed and slammed into the tree with the force of ten mountains.

A huge boom echoed out, and the gigantic tree trembled even more violently. Suddenly, enormous waves surged out on the surface of the Heavenspan River as a 30-meter-wide root exploded out. It was over 3,000 meters long and razor-sharp, causing whistling sounds to echo out as it sped toward the Blood Ancestor.

SMASH!

The Blood Ancestor wasn't hurt, but many of the Blood Stream Division cultivators inside coughed up blood from the force of the blow, and had to struggle to prevent their cultivation bases from surging out of control. Bai Xiaochun knew that time was limited, so he quickly unleashed another fist strike.

It was a fist strike that could seriously injure even a Nascent Soul cultivator, but the Dire Skybanyan did not fall!

And yet, the ancient tree was shocked by the threatening power of the Blood Ancestor, and could tell that only a small portion was being used. If the Blood Ancestor's full battle prowess were unleashed, a single fist strike would be more than enough to cause the Dire Skybanyan to explode into countless fragments!

Even still, the small portion of power being used was still shocking. Although the tree wasn't confident in being able to harm the giant, it was sure that it could kill the person inside who was controlling it!

At the moment, it was willing to pay any price to do just that! As Bai Xiaochun battered it, the tree began to sway back and forth. As for the cultivators of the Sky River Court, it was with complete shock, and fully bloodshot eyes, that they attempted to intervene.

It was in that moment of crisis that a second root shot out toward the Blood Ancestor, then a third and a fourth.

Whistling screams filled the air, and Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth. Considering he was in the heart cavity, the brunt of the

attacks were being borne by others. Even still, blood was oozing out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, and on top of that, the power of the attacks was increasing.

Moments later, a fifth root appeared, then more, until there were eight. The cultivators inside the Blood Ancestor were having a hard time sustaining such force, and many of them were lapsing into unconsciousness. As a result, Bai Xiaochun's control over the Blood Ancestor was beginning to falter.

However, the sustained barrage by the Blood Ancestor had knocked open a gap in the trunk of the Dire Skybanyan!

"I can't keep things up like this!" Bai Xiaochun thought, eyes flickering. Roaring at the top of his lungs, he stretched the Blood Ancestor's hands out, shoving them into the gap that had opened, and then exerted all the strength he could muster to rip the opening wider!

An ear-piercing ripping sound echoed out, causing numerous Sky River Court cultivators on both banks of the river to let out bloodcurdling screams. Even the Nascent Soul cultivators fighting up in the air were shocked.

Bai Xiaochun ripped the gap open to double its previous size, causing the screams of the Dire Skybanyan to echo high into the heavens.

As the huge tree struggled, the waters of the Heavenspan River water seethed, and massive waves rolled out as a gigantic root

erupted into the air.

When the huge root slammed into the Blood Ancestor, Bai Xiaochun felt like he was about to pass out. Many of the other cultivators inside the Blood Ancestor coughed up blood. Bai Xiaochun could sense his control over the Blood Ancestor slipping away.

It was in that very moment that two enormous, 30,000-meter-long roots suddenly rose up from within the Heavenspan River.

They were clearly different from the other roots; they were the main roots of the Dire Skybanyan! They were like enormous pillars, one on the right, one on the left, smashing toward the Blood Ancestor!

It was a critical moment in which there was no time for pondering or consideration. Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bright red, and he was operating fully on instinct. The Blood Ancestor's left hand reached out to grab the huge root on the left side. Clamping it under the Blood Ancestor's left armpit, Bai Xiaochun sent the right hand out to grab the other root and do the same!

Rumbling sounds echoed out from the right and left. Bai Xiaochun's face was as white as a sheet of paper as he exercised the last bit of control he was capable of... to bend the Blood Ancestor's legs!

“Maybe I can't kill you, but I can lock you down!” The Blood Ancestor gripped the two main roots tightly, then began to sink

down into the river!

Intense rumbling sounds could be heard as the Blood Ancestor sank below the surface of the Heavenspan River, holding the two roots as he descended toward the river bottom. No matter how the Dire Skybanyan struggled, it was incapable of preventing this from happening.

ROAR!!

The Dire Skybanyan was going mad, but was helpless. In the blink of an eye, the sinking Blood Ancestor caused the Dire Skybanyan to begin to tilt over.

Now that it was locked in place, it was difficult for the Dire Skybanyan to struggle, let alone unleash its most powerful divine abilities. Taking advantage of the moment, Bai Xiaochun opened the Blood Ancestor's mouth and let out a shocking roar from beneath the surface of the Heavenspan River.

Instantly, a blast of air carved out a tunnel within the water, within which appeared numerous Blood Stream Division cultivators. Borrowing the force of the blast of air, they shot out into the open. Gold Core cultivators, Foundation Establishment experts, patriarchs, and even vast numbers of Outer and Inner Sect disciples all burst out into the open.

All of them had injuries, but as soon as they bathed in the light cast by the Pill Stream Division's cauldron, their wounds began to mend. Clearly, they had been prepared for this moment. As soon as

they were out in the open, members of the other three divisions rushed to aid them, and many of them grouped up into the Blood Stream Division's locust-like battle formations.

The Nascent Soul cultivators, including Master Godwind, Patriarch Limitless, and the Song Clan patriarch, all roared and transformed into beams of light that went to join the Nascent Soul battles.

Although all of them were injured in various ways, as soon as they joined the fighting, the Nascent Soul battles became like the Gold Core battles, and favored the River-Defying Sect!

As for the Gold Core battles, they became even more one-sided.

The last person to fly out of the Blood Ancestor's mouth was Bai Xiaochun, blood spraying out of his mouth. As soon as he was visible, eight cultivators from the Spirit Stream Division shot toward him.

These eight were no strangers to Bai Xiaochun. They were the same compatriots with whom he had formed the ninth spell formation of Mount Daoseed. Without the slightest hesitation, they closed in on Bai Xiaochun, and immediately, the light of a spell formation appeared.

"Form up!" Bai Xiaochun roared. Instantly, light rose up around the nine of them, becoming a 300-meter-tall giant, which leaped into the air. As it sailed upward, its right hand shot out, and a blood-colored greatsword appeared. That sword was formed from

the blood qi of the cultivators of Middle Peak!

Bai Xiaochun raised the sword high into the air and then slashed it down, whereupon it sliced a nearby skybanyan into two parts!

RUMBLE!

Everything shook wildly, and all onlookers were completely shaken by the preparation and teamwork shown by the River-Defying Sect.

That was especially true of the audience of cultivator clans and smaller sects. Their minds were completely spinning, and their scalps were tingling with shock.

The power and determination shown by the River-Defying Sect left them completely shaken down to their souls.

The battle between the Blood Ancestor and the Dire Skybanyan was something no one would ever be able to forget for their entire lives. Whether it was that fight, or the fighting with the Nascent Soul cultivators or the Gold Core experts, it was clear that the Sky River Court had the disadvantage!

All of the cultivators from the clans and sects were left gasping, their eyes shining with strange light.

Chapter 331: Indestructible In Foundation Establishment

The fighting spirit among the River-Defying Sect and the Sky River Court raged over the Heavenspan River. Rumbling sounds filled the air, and vicious gleams could be seen in the eyes of all cultivators!

Miserable shrieks echoed out, and magical techniques lit up the sky. Although the River-Defying Sect's patriarchs and the Gold Core cultivators held the advantage in the fighting, the assassination techniques used by the Sky River Court were a big source of frustration. When facing such techniques, even the slightest misstep could lead to death.

After all, when the Sky River Court had initially been punished by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, their top-level forces, and even middle level forces, had all suffered severe losses. However, the low-level cultivators hadn't been affected as much.

The fighting going on over the Heavenspan River was incredibly fierce. The four divisions of the River-Defying Sect had already experienced such fighting in the Lower Reaches, and were familiar with large-scale battles. Although they were initially surprised by the Sky River Court's unique battle tactics, it didn't take long before the fighting reached a deadlock.

As far as the River-Defying Sect was concerned, that was a good position to be in. All they needed to do was wait for the patriarchs and Gold Core cultivators to seize victory, and then the rest of the enemy forces could be easily crushed!

Massive rumbling sounds echoed out. As for the clans and sects which had already sworn allegiance to the River-Defying Sect, although they weren't making a huge showing on the battlefield, they were providing significant assistance, and were fighting just as fiercely as everyone else.

As the deadlock continued, numerous Chosen rose to prominence in the fighting. Shangguan Tianyou controlled one of the spell formation incarnations, and the sword qi he unleashed caused a web of swords to appear, a dazzling sight as it swept across the battlefield.

Ghostfang didn't say much, but his attacks were extremely intimidating. The spell formation he was part of became just like him, abounding with ghost qi. Numerous pitch-black ghost hands appeared, which unleashed deadly violence onto the Sky River Court enemies.

Then there was Hou Yunfei, Gongsun Yun, as well as cultivators from the Blood Stream Division such as Song Que, Xuemei, Master God-Diviner, Jia Lie, Song Junwan, the three blood masters and the grand elders. Everyone was attacking with full power, making a spectacular showing on the battlefield.

Others were also present, such as Nine-Isles from the Profound Stream Division. He had long since recovered, and usually spent his time avoiding Bai Xiaochun. Now, he took advantage of the opportunity this battle presented him to vent his frustration.

There were few Chosen among the Pill Stream Division disciples. The spectacular beauty Chen Manyao was actually the only one, but she was extremely skilled in commanding the army on the field of battle. Pill Stream Division squads of three to five cultivators roved about, unleashing toxic gases, or using healing powers to aid their comrades.

In fact, it was mostly because of the Pill Stream Division that the River-Defying Sect was able to benefit from the deadlock.

Chen Manyao's orders kept the Pill Stream Division cultivators completely in order, moving about the battlefield with particular skill and finesse.

As Chen Manyao sent out one order after another, strange light gleamed in her eyes. She was like a star shining over the aquatic battlefield, and became the second most important target for the Sky River Court.

The person who people were paying attention to the most, however, had just emerged from the Blood Ancestor and then formed a giant incarnation. It was Bai Xiaochun, who wielded an enormous greatsword formed from blood qi!

Considering that the look in Bai Xiaochun's eyes was the same as the look in the eyes of the Blood Ancestor, everyone could tell that he had been the person in control of the blood giant!

Of course, even though the Sky River Court had been prohibited from interfering with the affairs of the Lower Reaches cultivation

world, they were able to gather intelligence. As such, they knew that he was also the person responsible for unifying all of the Lower Reaches sects.

Therefore, almost as soon as he appeared, the Sky River Court forces glared over at him and sent a wave of assassins in his direction. At the same time, numerous smaller skybanyans began to race toward him, expressions those of madness and ferocity.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glowed with red light. As of this moment, he felt like he was back fighting the Luochen Clan, or in the Fallen Sword Abyss. Even the fighting outside the Profound Stream Sect city had been similar. Throwing his head back, he roared, causing blood qi to surge around him, increasing the battle prowess of the Blood Stream Division cultivators in the area.

Bruiser could sense Bai Xiaochun's energy, and also let out a howl, causing waves of battle beasts to leap toward the Sky River Court forces.

Then there were the refined corpses, gargoyles, and puppets. A dazzling display could be seen on the battlefield as endless booms and crashes rang out.

Bai Xiaochun swung his blood sword at an incoming skybanyan treant. Even as he did, an explosive voice roared, "Die!!"

The voice came seemingly out of nowhere. Simultaneously, eight Foundation Establishment cultivators materialized out of thin air. Every one of them was clearly a cold-blooded assassin, and none of

them paused for even a moment before unleashing their most powerful attacks onto Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered as he followed through with his blood sword strike. Even as he slashed the skybanyan treant into two pieces, his energy erupted, and an enormous figure formed behind him. In the blink of an eye, it became crystal clear; shockingly, it was the manifestation of his Undying Asura Body!

The undying asura and the spell formation incarnation merged together, and when the combined attacks of the eight Foundation Establishment cultivators landed on it, the only thing that happened was that the Foundation Establishment cultivators coughed up mouthfuls of blood. Looks of disbelief and terror appeared on their faces.

“Impossible!!”

“What type of fleshly body is that? I can't believe something like this exists!!”

“Dammit! He's almost at the point where he's indestructible within the Foundation Establishment stage!!”

The eight cultivators were so shocked that their qi and blood was in chaos. Looking at Bai Xiaochun like he was a ghost, they didn't hesitate for even a moment to begin to flee at top speed.

“Indestructible in Foundation Establishment?” Bai Xiaochun

wasn't hurt in the least. He let go of the blood sword, allowing it to dissipate as he performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing all of the resulting blood qi to form into a cloud of smaller blood swords, which shot out like a tempest wind.

The eight Foundation Establishment cultivators didn't have the time to flee very far. The blood sword formation swept over them, slashing away their flesh and blood and chopping their bones into dust. By the time the wind passed, not a single trace remained of the eight cultivators.

When the other Sky River Court cultivators saw this, they gasped in shock. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes flickered with cold light as he looked around the battlefield. He saw River-Defying Sect cultivators dying here and there, killed at the hands of the assassins. Hatred began to gleam in his eyes, and instead of continuing his fight with the skybanyan treants, he began to flit across the battlefield looking for the elusive assassins.

Everywhere he went, thunderous booms could be heard. The assassin's murderous methods didn't hurt Bai Xiaochun at all, not with the explosive power of his Asura Body.

Instantly, the assassins began to tremble and hide. None of them dared to get anywhere near Bai Xiaochun. Just as Bai Xiaochun was about to start hunting them down, a roar of rage echoed out behind him, and it came from one of the skybanyan treants that was twice as tall as any of the others.

A bizarre gleam could be seen in the eyes of the huge treant, whose body was festooned with freshly severed heads. Some of

those heads belonged to Spirit Stream Division disciples, and when Bai Xiaochun saw that, his murderous aura erupted.

Suddenly, a face appeared on the trunk of the treant. It was a young man, whose venomous eyes were filled with madness. Looking at Bai Xiaochun, he said, “Indestructible in Foundation Establishment? Invincible within your stage? Trifling Lower Reaches punk. I’ll show you what it means to be invincible. I’ll show you what an indestructible Foundation Establishment fleshly body is!”

Looking nervously at the treant speeding toward him, Bai Xiaochun murmured. “A Sky River Court Chosen? Every time I see people looking crazy like this, I feel like I need to bring them to their senses....”

Without any hesitation, he shot forward with the Mountain Shaking Bash!

Every time the Mountain Shaking Bash appeared, his energy rose even higher than before!

As the Mountain Shaking Bash was unleashed, a second asura appeared behind him, which merged with the first asura, causing his power to skyrocket!

He moved with such speed that the treant had no time to react. He was nothing more than a blur of afterimages, like an entire mountain smashing through the air toward the treant.

A huge boom echoed out, and everyone in the area gasped. As for the treant, it let out a bloodcurdling scream as it was sent flying backward, tumbling through the air like a kite with its string cut, all the way until it slammed into the ground on the bank of the river.

At that point, it went silent.

“Can’t take a hit, can we?” Bai Xiaochun said proudly. The other eight cultivators in the formation with him all smiled wryly, and knew that the situation had been under control the entire time. There were few people in the Foundation Establishment stage who could withstand the Mountain Shaking Bash.

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Chapter 332: Someone's Definitely Protecting Me

A huge crater was now visible in the jungle on the right bank of the river.

There, the broken and shattered body of a skybanyan treant could be seen. It was currently dead, but struggling out from inside was the arrogant young Chosen who had spoken with Bai Xiaochun moments ago.

There was no madness or arrogance on his face now, only terror. After a bit of hesitation, his reverence toward Bai Xiaochun caused him to simply sit down in place cross-legged and meditate.

Bai Xiaochun felt very pleased. It was only after emerging from the Blood Ancestor that he realized that his time inside the giant had been incredibly beneficial, especially to his Undying Live Forever Technique. Thanks to the absorption of power inside the giant, he had already reached the point of being able to materialize a second asura.

Of course, he knew that he would be one of the main targets on the battlefield, and had actually waited for someone to try to plot against him. Just when he was being picked on, that was when he chose to fight back with vicious force.

Considering that he had knocked the arrogant Chosen completely off the battlefield, and that the young man hadn't made a peep afterward, Bai Xiaochun felt more at ease than ever.

“Let’s see who dares to pick on me now!” he said proudly.

The surrounding Sky River Court cultivators looked at him with terror in their eyes, and just as he had said, not a single one dared to approach him. Even the smaller skybanyan trees were trembling at the sight of his use of the Mountain Shaking Bash.

As for the cultivators, they were forced to stew in their irritation, and hope that the spell formation around him would crumble, leaving him out in the open. Only then would they be able to show him what it was like to fight without the protection of a spell formation!

“Dammit! I refuse to believe that he can keep that spell formation powered up for much longer!”

“Hmph! Once he’s out in the open, we can see what this guy’s real battle prowess is like!” Although they were cursing him in their hearts, the Sky River Court cultivators had no choice other than to flee from Bai Xiaochun.

“Hey,” he howled cockily, “don’t run! I’m ready to fight till the bitter end! Bring it on!” However, he simply watched them as they ran away, feeling more wonderful than ever.

Thanks to Bai Xiaochun, the River-Defying Sect cultivators were able to relax momentarily, and also solidify their defensive positions within the deadlock.

Before long, the River-Defying Sect Gold Core cultivators were able to increase their advantage. Hundreds of Gold Core experts had pooled their power to create a sword formation that had already injured numerous contemporaries among the Sky River Court.

Some of the Sky River Court Gold Core cultivators had already met their end in the fighting, and soon, the group as a whole began to retreat. Down below, people looked up to see the Sky River Court Gold Core cultivators being chased across the battlefield by the River-Defying Sect.

Finally, one of the River-Defying Sect's prime elders indicated that the time had come to attack, and the four divisions charged forth excitedly over the river water.

Now that the River-Defying Sect was seizing the initiative on the river, the Sky River Court's Nascent Soul expert who was half a step into the Deva Realm shoved back Master Godwind, Frigidsect, Crimson soul, and Sieve Pill. Waving his sleeve, he pointed toward the Dire Skybanyan and howled in a mixture of grief and anger, "Protect the sect headquarters! Activate the grand spell formation!"

As his words echoed out like thunder, a green field of light shot out from the enormous Dire Skybanyan and exerted a powerful gravitational force.

That force locked onto the cultivators of the Sky River Court and,

in the blink of an eye, hauled them back toward the tree. That included the Gold Core cultivators and the Foundation Establishment experts.

With the spell formation activated, this part of the Heavenspan River was completely sealed tight. The River-Defying Sect would now be forced to expend significant effort to break through, which should have given Sky River Court some breathing room in the already dire situation they were in!

Unfortunately for them, the Dire Skybanyan's spell formation wasn't complete. Astonishingly, there were two enormous gaps in the shield, one on the right side and the other on the left!

Obviously, the reason they had waited until now to activate the formation was because it was so weak! The spell formation actually had openings.

“Abandon the Heavenspan River!” said Patriarch Frigidsect. “It's time for the second offensive. Attack the Sky River Court headquarters through the jungle!” In accordance with the previously drafted battle plans, the most powerful division, the Blood Stream Division, teamed up with the weakest division, the Pill Stream Division, and headed to the left bank of the river, where they began to pour into the jungle.

The Spirit Stream Division and the Profound Stream Division joined forces to head into the jungle on the right bank.

This was the jungle offensive!

Because the jungle was so cramped and crowded, it wasn't appropriate to use the spell formation giants or the Profound Stream puppets. In the jungle offensive, all of the disciples would rely on their own power to fight.

Countless cultivators were attacking from both flanks, fighting their way rapidly toward the Sky River Court's headquarters. The Sky River Court forces had little time to rest. All of their cultivators, even the Gold Core experts, spread out to try to stop the advance of the River-Defying Sect.

Once again, fighting broke out between the Nascent Soul patriarchs!

Before the truly deadly fighting began, the River-Defying Sect patriarchs made arrangements for the Outer and Inner Sect disciples to retreat to the Heavenspan Battleships, where they would be safer.

Only Foundation Establishment cultivators and higher would participate in this battle. After all, without spell formations to protect them, any injuries the weaker disciples received would likely lead to deaths.

That was war!

To provide an incentive, the patriarchs had agreed that none of the spoils of war procured in the jungle offensive needed to be offered up to the sect, but could be kept by whoever won them!

However, infighting among fellow sect members was strictly prohibited. Everyone was excited, but at the same time, didn't dare to violate the rules.

After Bai Xiaochun's spell formation broke apart, he exchanged glances with his eight compatriots, then they all clasped hands and bowed to each other. None of them spoke as they shot at top speed into the jungle.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. As he looked at the jungle, what he thought about most was his encounter with the Luochen Clan. The surroundings here looked very similar to those mountains back then.

"Considering I'm so important, there will definitely be someone looking out for me...." Even still, he took a deep breath, gritted his teeth, and slapped his bag of holding. Instantly, a big stack of paper talismans appeared. Next, smacking sounds rang out as he began to place them all over his body. Within moments, a hundred layers of glowing shields appeared. He limited the number of course; too many shields would be too eye-catching.

Having accomplished that, he sped into motion, drawing upon the explosive power of his fleshly body to speed into the jungle toward the Sky River Court's headquarters, the Dire Skybanyan.

The jungle was very humid, and the occasional miserable scream echoed out here and there. Some of those screams came from the forces of the Sky River Court, others came from the River-Defying

Sect. Bai Xiaochun was soon panting. After less time passed than it takes half an incense stick to burn, his expression flickered, and he suddenly dodged to the side. As he did, four Foundation Establishment cultivators appeared. Two of them unleashed palm strikes that slammed into the ground exactly where Bai Xiaochun had just been standing.

The other two attacks landed on Bai Xiaochun's shields!

The shields emitted cracking sounds, but held fast. In fact, they even sent backlash attacks to the two Foundation Establishment cultivators, instantly destabilizing their qi and blood. As the two cultivators staggered backward, Bai Xiaochun howled and shot forward, smashing into one of the cultivator's chest.

A boom could be heard, and the cultivator shrieked. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as his chest caved in, and he tumbled across the ground for several meters before coming to a stop, dead.

Even as the other three cultivators stared in shock, Bai Xiaochun's hand flashed with black light as it shot out with lightning speed. A gravitational force erupted, and one of the fleeing Foundation Establishment cultivators suddenly found himself flying toward Bai Xiaochun. Before he could do anything, Bai Xiaochun's hand had clamped onto his throat!

The Throat Crushing Grasp!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun clenched his fingers together. The Foundation Establishment cultivator's eyes bulged,

and then he was dead!

When the other two cultivators saw what had just occurred, their eyes went wide, and they began to flee in terror. When they had seen him on his own, they had been itching to tangle with him, but never could they have imagined that, even without his spell formation incarnation, he would be completely terrifying!

Even as they turned to flee, Bai Xiaochun extended his right hand, and blood qi swirled into the shape of a 30-meter-long beam of blood-colored light, which then slashed out like the sharpest of blades.

The two fleeing cultivators shivered, then looked down in shock to find that they had been cut in half at the waist!

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Chapter 333: The Scream Of The Phoenix

Almost exactly when Bai Xiaochun cut down the last of the four Foundation Establishment cultivators who had just ambushed him, a strange cry rose up from the distant Sky River Court.

“Hehehe. Hehehe....” Everyone who heard the bizarre, echoing laughter felt a cold chill spreading out across their body, almost as if they were being frozen.

As the laughter rang out, a beam of light rose up from within the Sky River Court, which came to a stop high in the air. Visible there was a cloth doll!

It was only about a meter tall, and dressed in a ragged garment full of holes. It only had a few tufts of hair on its head, and a bizarre smile on its face!

It seemed like something completely ordinary, the type of toy any child might have at hand. But as it hovered there, it emanated a terrifying aura, and let out cackling laughter.

Its eyes shone with red light, making it seem viciously bloodthirsty. Almost as soon as it appeared, it flickered, vanishing, to reappear in front of one of the River-Defying Sect cultivators. The cultivator’s eyes went wide, and then his head exploded, sending blood spraying out in all directions, accompanied by mad laughter.

Everyone who saw the scene play out gasped. As for Bai

Xiaochun, his scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode.

“Is that the Sky River Court’s reserve power precious treasure?” he thought. At the same time, Gongsun Wan’er was in another location in the jungle, looking up at the doll with scorn flickering in her eyes.

That was when, all of a sudden, another beam of light cut through the air, speeding rapidly toward the cloth doll. Within that beam of light was the Blood Stream Division’s reserve power, the scarecrow!

It also wore a bizarre smile, and held a patch of skin in its hand. As it flew along, it threw the patch of skin on as if it were a garment, and then sped toward the doll.

Shocking rumbling echoed out as the two bizarre beings slammed into each other and started fighting. The freakish laughter which rang out was bizarre to the extreme!

Many of the River-Defying Sect cultivators breathed sighs of relief. However, Bai Xiaochun, along with the Gold Core experts and some of the particularly quick-thinking Foundation Establishment cultivators, all had anxious looks on their faces!

“If that doll is the Sky River Court’s reserve power, then good. But what if it’s not the reserve power, but rather a lower-level precious treasure? If a mere low-level precious treasure requires the Blood Stream Division’s reserve power to handle, then what

would their true reserve power look like?!” Based on what Bai Xiaochun could see, the doll didn’t really seem like a reserve power. If the Dire Skybanyan was considered a reserve power, then Bai Xiaochun couldn’t even imagine what other types of reserve powers the Sky River Court might have.

Even as shock gripped his heart, a piercing scream rang out through the air, and something else flew out from the Sky River Court headquarters. It was a shroud, complete with brownish blood stains and a terrifying, indescribable aura.

Clearly, this shroud was on the same level of power as the cloth doll!

As it screamed through the air, a stream of smoke suddenly rose up from below. Golden light poured out from the smoke, which formed into the shape of a middle-aged Daoist. The Daoist immediately strode forward to intercept the shroud!

That projection was the reserve power of the Profound Stream Division!

The lands were filled with the rumbling of combat, which caused Bai Xiaochun to start to pant. He was feeling anything but safe at the moment, so he quickly produced some more talismans. After collecting the four bags of holding from his enemies, he cautiously made his way forward across the battlefield.

Doing his best to avoid looking up at the fighting in the air above, he focused on his surroundings, trying to move as quickly as

possible. At one point, his eyes suddenly flickered, and he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Waving his finger, he summoned a violet cauldron, which then smashed down toward the ground.

A huge crater opened up. Snorting coldly, Bai Xiaochun opened his third eye, and immediately saw something standing next to the cauldron that was only visible because of the power of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye.

Not pausing for even a moment, he burst forward, clenching his hand into a fist and unleashing a fist strike backed by the power of his Asura Body.

The figure up ahead seemed shocked, and fell back at top speed. However, the force of the blow still slammed into him, causing blood to spray out of his mouth. The figure solidified into a middle-aged man, who was looking at Bai Xiaochun with shock.

“You can see me!?!?” Even as the words left his mouth, he turned to flee. However, a pair of wings sprouted out behind Bai Xiaochun, and a single flap sent him rocketing forward, his right foot spinning through the air in a powerful, swiping kick.

The cultivator tried to defend himself, even pulling out a large collection of defensive magical items. However, a boom rang out as the magical items were easily destroyed by Bai Xiaochun’s kick. The kick then smashed into the cultivator, crushing the life out of him instantly.

Bai Xiaochun didn't stop moving. Grabbing the enemy's bag of holding, he proceeded onward, keeping his Dharma eye open. Any enemies who had concealed themselves in his path were completely incapable of escaping. Soon, Bai Xiaochun changed his trajectory, taking advantage of his sight to help out any fellow sect members who were in trouble.

He saw many corpses along the way. Some were Sky River Court cultivators, others belonged to members of the River-Defying Sect. Some of them were people he knew, which caused him to sink further into silence.

He was unsure of how to express the emotions he was feeling, but he was sure of one thing: his murderous aura was growing more intense by the moment....

"So, this is what cultivation brings...?" he murmured. He understood the truth of matters. He had come to that understanding long ago, based on what he had experienced with the Luo Chen Clan, in the Fallen Sword Abyss, and fighting outside the Profound Stream Sect city. However, whenever he came face to face with reality, it filled him with complex emotions.

Even as he sank further into silence, he suddenly heard a shrieking call off in the distance. It was a scream of anxiety and grief, and as soon as he heard it, his heart trembled painfully.

Although other people might not be sensitive to that cry, to Bai Xiaochun, it was like thunder crashing into his mind. He recognized that call!

“A phoenix?” Bai Xiaochun sped up, heading as fast as he could in the direction of the anxious cries. As he neared, he saw the very same phoenix that had consumed his Aphrodisiac Pill all those years ago. It seemed to be completely maddened; despite being injured and soaked with blood, it was doing everything it could to attack a black-robed young woman from the Sky River Court.

The young woman’s face was grim, and there was a long, ugly scar on it that marred her beauty. Her eyes gleamed with a murderous light, and she radiated a sensation of intense danger.

Held in her hand was the severed head of an old man, whose eyes were still filled with the disbelief that had struck him in the moments before death.

On the ground at the young woman’s feet was a headless body, clad in the robes of the Spirit Stream Division, blood pooling up around it.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw the head, his eyes went wide, and he began to tremble. “Elder Zhou!!”

The severed head belonged to none other than the Spirit Stream Division’s Elder Zhou from Fragrant Cloud Peak, who had taken over as peak lord from Li Qinghou!

Bai Xiaochun was shaking visibly, his lips trembling, his mind filled with countless scenes from the past....

He remembered back in the ovens when he and Big Fatty Zhang had pilfered the precious materials that had been meant for Elder Zhou....

He thought back to when this very phoenix had led Elder Zhou to the Medicine Concocting Pavilion to accuse him....

He thought back to Elder Zhou's enraged howls as he shot off of Fragrant Cloud Peak to chase Bai Xiaochun, and how he had screamed miserably the entire time....

Back in the qualifying round before the north and south bank Chosen Battles, he had intended to come in last. However, it had been Elder Zhou's provocation that caused him to flee and take first place....

The memories filled his mind, and then shattered in a burst of indescribable grief. That grief filled his heart, until it was ready to explode out like lightning from the heavens.

Glaring at the young woman, his hands slowly clenched into fists.

When the phoenix saw Bai Xiaochun, it shrieked in anguish and then began to fly toward him. That was when the young woman slowly raised her hand and pointed at the phoenix.

A black stream of light flew out, transforming into a huge mouth

that shot toward the phoenix to consume it.

“Are you looking to die!?!?” Bai Xiaochun roared. He took a step forward, and his veins of steel began to pulse. Another step, and he was past the phoenix, where he unleashed a fist strike onto the enormous black mouth.

A boom echoed out as the black mouth collapsed, sending black mist pouring out in all directions. However, the mist didn't dissipate. In the blink of an eye, it reformed into the shape of the young woman!

The version of her off in the distance was nothing more than an afterimage. Her true body was now right in front of Bai Xiaochun, sneering with disdain as she stabbed her index finger toward his forehead!

Because of how close she was, dodging the move wasn't an option. And yet, Bai Xiaochun hadn't even considered doing such a thing. His Undying Live Forever Technique erupted with power, and his Asura Body manifested behind him. Instead of retreating, he headbutted her!

The young woman's face fell. Never could she have imagined that he would do something so vicious. Before she could react, his head slammed into her finger, causing a cracking sound to ring out. The young woman immediately sped backward, her finger mangled and her eyes shining with a very serious look.

“I don't have time to waste tangling with you!” she said hoarsely,

turning to leave.

“Yeah, well tangling with you is exactly what I feel like doing!” Although Bai Xiaochun’s forehead was injured, he didn’t seem to notice. His right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and then he shoved his palm out. “Blood Annihilation World!”

Instantly, boundless blood qi erupted out from him, forming sealing marks which then took the shape of a whole world that blocked the young woman’s path of retreat.

—

Chapter 334: Completely Crushed!

“Looking to die!?!?” the young woman said with an enraged laugh, the killing intent in her eyes bursting with intensity. Her cultivation base was in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, and she was an extremely adept killer. In fact, she had killed quite a few other cultivators in the great circle. Were it not for the fact that she was on a special, urgent mission, and Bai Xiaochun was clearly beyond ordinary, she would never have just fled.

And yet, here he was, blocking her path as if he didn't know what was good for him!

Bai Xiaochun's expression was placid, but his eyes were bloodshot, and he was surrounded by a strong murderous aura that caused the Blood Annihilation World to ripple and distort. Without the slightest hesitation, he waved his finger in the direction of Elder Zhou's corpse.

Instantly, all of the Elder Zhou's shed blood began to merge together and float up into the air, where it turned into a blood-colored sword!

Staring at the woman, he said, “Don't get anxious.... It will only take a moment for me to cut you down with this sword!”

In response, the woman's laughter grew louder. And yet, for some reason, perhaps because of the expression on Bai Xiaochun's face, she felt unease growing inside of her.

“Since you have a death wish,” she said, “I guess I’ll help you get what you want!” Eyes flickering with killing intent, she performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, her body blurred, and nine streams of black mist erupted out, which began to gobble up the spiritual energy in the area. In the blink of an eye, the nine streams of mist had become nine enormous waves, racing toward Bai Xiaochun from nine different directions.

Apparently, if those nine waves converged upon each other, they would explode with shocking power!

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, the young woman attacked with surgical precision and quickness. In the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, the nine waves were locked down on Bai Xiaochun and closing in rapidly.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered with cold light, and his heart burned with lingering pain. The death of Elder Zhou, and the anguish of the phoenix, gave him an even clearer understanding about war, and about cultivation. Within the bitterness visible in his eyes, a killing intent erupted out. Instead of backing away from the waves, he lifted his right hand and waved it out in front of him.

In response, a surge of violet qi erupted, whizzing through the air to form a huge, 300-meter-wide violet cauldron that settling around him protectively.

BOOM!

A deafening boom rang out as the nine waves slammed into the huge cauldron.

The cauldron began to tremble; the force of each successive wave was greater than the wave before it, and from the look of things, the cauldron was about to collapse.

“Die!” said the young woman, hovering some distance off in the air. At the same time, she lifted her right hand and viciously stabbed out with her index finger.

In response, the nine waves swirled and transformed into countless black leaves. The leaves began to spin around the enormous cauldron, emitting an incisive aura that slashed at it like countless sharp blades.

Rumbling echoed out, and the cauldron shook even more violently than before. Finally, the slashing of the leaves caused the cauldron to shatter, allowing the leaves to speed inside toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun watched all of this happen without commenting. The woman’s magical techniques were strange, and she was clearly no stranger to magical combat. However, he didn’t care about any of that. Taking a deep breath, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a black parasol.

It was none other than the Eternal Parasol!

Without any hesitation, he lifted it over his head and opened it!

His cultivation base erupted with the power of nine crystallized spiritual seas. Streams of Heaven-Dao aura also swirled about, seemingly connecting him to heaven and earth. Strange ripples even appeared in the sky above the battlefield.

The huge black parasol almost seemed like the night itself as it spread out to cover Bai Xiaochun. At the same time, he poured his cultivation base power into it, causing a black glow to spread out.

That glow was the black of night!

At the same time, an astonishing gravitational force erupted out, causing the young woman's face to flicker. Then she cried out in alarm as her body began to tremble and then wither rapidly. White streams of mist began to pour out from her eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, which were then sucked relentlessly toward the black parasol.

Those streams of mist were her life force!!

“What is that thing!?” she shrieked, shaking violently. She tried to back away, but seemed locked in place in midair. No matter how she struggled, she couldn't prevent her life force from streaming out of her. Even as her hair began to turn white, she suddenly bit down on her tongue, unleashing the power of self-detonation!

Her right eye exploded, sending blood spraying out in all directions. However, the force of the explosion ripped her free from the gravitational force, shoving her backward by several dozen meters. There, she coughed up more blood, then glared at Bai Xiaochun with venomous hatred and, at the same time, fear. Of course, most of her terror was because of the Eternal Parasol.

Almost immediately, her body began to turn translucent as she prepared to fade into the air and make her escape. Her only desire now was to escape the Blood Annihilation World and then leave this place.

Without any hesitation, Bai Xiaochun put away the Eternal Parasol and shot after her at top speed. Inwardly, he was bemoaning the fact that his ruse hadn't played out exactly as he'd wished. He'd intentionally provoked her into attacking with the hopes that he could use his Eternal Parasol to drain her life force.

However, this young woman was a Chosen of the Sky River Court, on the very cusp of reaching the Gold Core stage. Not only was she more than an ordinary cultivator, but Bai Xiaochun's current cultivation base made it difficult for him to control the parasol. Because of that, she managed to escape.

Even as he bore down on her with lightning speed, she began to fade away, until only ripples were visible in the spot where she had just been.

"You're not getting away!" he said, his voice filled with an intense coldness that even he didn't realize was there, a coldness like the dead of winter. As the coldness spread out, he opened his

Heavenspan Dharma Eye.

As soon as he looked around with his third eye, he unhesitatingly clenched his fist and unleashed a fist strike directly to his left.

A boom rang out, and the air distorted. The young woman suddenly became visible, blood oozing out of her mouth, a look of incredulity and terror on her face.

“How did he find me!?!?” The young woman’s heart was starting to pound. She had been injured again, and was now incapable of fleeing. “Dammit, how could the River-Defying Sect have a cultivator like this? His cultivation base isn’t weak, nor is his fleshly body. His magical techniques are bizarre, and he obviously has a lot of experience fighting. He’s actually managed to pin me down!!” Because of Bai Xiaochun’s strange techniques, she was incapable of fleeing the Blood Annihilation World. Suddenly, her left eye was shot with blood as she realized that instead of fleeing, she had to risk everything in a fight to the death!

“Inverse Blood Sky Spirit!” she shrieked. Instantly, all of the blood in her body began to flow in reverse, causing an intense energy to rise up from within her. At the same time, a powerful aura of plants and vegetation began to spread out.

From a distance, she appeared to be surrounded by scintillating, emerald-colored light. Numerous types of plants and vegetation began to grow around her, almost as if she were becoming one with the jungle around her. Then the plants began to twist and distort as they shot through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

It was almost as if Bai Xiaochun wasn't just fighting this young woman, but rather all of the plants in the jungle around him!

“Let's see how you handle this!” she said, her killing intent surging. Countless leaves, vines, and flowers became a tempest hundreds of meters in diameter. As they swept out, the Blood Annihilation World began to emit creaking noises as it teetered on the verge of collapse.

Cultivators on both sides of the conflict in the area all noticed, and were shocked.

“I'll show you exactly how I handle it!” Bai Xiaochun replied, his expression growing even more icy than before. Taking a deep breath, he reached out with both hands and performed an incantation gesture. As the tempest of vegetation closed in, he swept his hands violently through the air, simultaneously uttering three words!

“Magic Plant... Arsenal!”

BZZZZZZ!

His hair whipped about him as his energy soared, and he drew upon his great circle cultivation base, his Heaven-Dao aura, and his skill in the Dao of medicine, to use the very magic that Li Qinghou had bestowed upon him, the Magic Plant Arsenal!

Buzzing sounds filled the air as the vegetation around him suddenly stopped in place and began to tremble. It was almost as if two forces of will were battling it out within the tempest, vying for control over the plants and vegetation!

“Impossible!!” the young woman gasped, her face falling.

—

Chapter 335: Fatality!

The black-robed young woman's control over plants and vegetation had to do with her Dao of medicine. Coupled with the technique she cultivated, it created something like an innate divine ability that she could use to communicate with and manipulate all types of plants.

Although the Sky River Court was adept with spatial manipulation magic, their ultimate reserve power was the Dire Skybanyan. It was only natural for people who practiced cultivation on the huge tree to develop a connection with plants and vegetation. In fact, all disciples of the Sky River Court eventually formed a bond with a lesser skybanyan, which they could use as a weapon in battle!

Such an arrangement was less of an external manipulation of the plant, and more of a bonding in which the plant assisted the cultivator!

However, Bai Xiaochun's abilities were completely and utterly different. Using his skill in the Dao of medicine, and the Magic Plant Arsenal, he didn't seek to bond with or gain assistance from the plants, he sought total control!

He was skilled with techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression, and was familiar with how to fuse different types of plants and vegetation together. Coupled with his Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivation base and nine crystallized spiritual seas, he was capable of domineering feats that were beyond other Foundation Establishment cultivators!

This young woman was a Chosen from a Middle Reaches sect. Were it not for that, she would have long since been crushed by Bai Xiaochun. Even still, her struggles were proving useless!

“Begone from me!” he said, voice echoing like thunder, his eyes shining with strange light. With that, he waved both hands.

In response to his berating words, the tempest of plants and vegetation had no choice other than to turn in place and shoot back toward the black-robed young woman.

Complete incredulity could be seen in her eyes, and she almost seemed incapable of accepting the situation. By this point, she also realized that she had been tricked into the situation with the black parasol.

She was already becoming terrified of Bai Xiaochun’s battle tactics, especially that parasol. However, what was worst of all was that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t given her any chance to effectively utilize her spatial manipulation magic. His third eye made her feel like she was completely and utterly exposed no matter what she did.

Without spatial manipulation magic, it was difficult to utilize any assassination techniques, and also impossible to become invisible. It was almost like trying to fight with a limb having suddenly been crippled. She felt weaker than ever.

After experiencing so many setbacks, she finally decided to resort to her magic of plants and vegetation to kill Bai Xiaochun. And yet,

contrary to anything she could have imagined, he wrested control over her plants and vegetation as well!

“I refuse to accept this!!” she shrieked, her eyes more bloodshot than ever. She was almost on the verge of going crazy. As a Chosen of the Sky River Court, she had always been a proud and arrogant person, someone who could easily crush anyone in the same cultivation level as her. In fact, she was only a hair away from Gold Core. Never before had she ever encountered a situation in which someone in the same stage as her could control her so easily!

As the tempest closed in on her, she let out a miserable shriek. Then, she suddenly dropped to the ground and planted both hands down in front of her. Looking up, she shouted, “Treesoldier Incantation!!’

Suddenly, brown tendrils began to spread out from her feet and bore into the ground, tendrils that almost looked like roots!

At the same time, every portion of skin visible on her body was suddenly filled with bulging green veins, to the point where her skin looked like the surface of a plant!

As her skin turned green, her life aura suddenly erupted, transforming from that of a cultivator to that of a treant!

The Treesoldier Incantation was a legendary secret magic of the Sky River Court that allowed a cultivator to transform into a treant!

“I refuse to believe that you can wrest away my control of plants and vegetation!!” she yelled hoarsely. As of this point, she had completely transformed into a huge treant!

Rootlets spread out from her feet into the ground, causing the energy of the plants and vegetation to surge toward her.

In the blink of an eye, she was huge, fully 300 meters tall. From a distance, she almost looked like a true skybanyan!

When the tempest of plants and vegetation hit her, it instantly submitted to her, swirling around her before converging onto her right hand, where it formed the shape of a battle-axe!

It was a green battle-axe formed from countless types of plants and vegetation, and it radiated power that caused the surrounding jungle to tremble. By this point, the battle between this young woman and Bai Xiaochun was starting to attract quite a bit of attention.

“Time to die!!” she roared in a sonorous voice, her killing intent surging. With that, she lifted her tree-like arm into the air and then slashed the battle-axe down toward Bai Xiaochun.

As it descended, the power of plants and vegetation surged and grew, until nearly half of the power of the entire jungle was converged into that deadly blow!

An intense sensation of deadly crisis erupted inside of Bai

Xiaochun. By this point, his control over the Blood Annihilation World had weakened to the point where it had collapsed. The resulting blast caused even more people to take notice of what was happening.

“That’s Sect Uncle Bai!!”

“Elder Sister Tong!!”

As cultivators on both sides of the conflict began to cry out in alarm, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and then closed his eyes. Then he raised his right hand, not to perform an incantation gesture, nor to rotate his cultivation base. Instead, the image of a huge spike appeared in his mind!

As that spike appeared, the water vapor in the area began to swirl, growing denser and thicker, filling an entire 50-kilometer area.

Within that area, cultivators of both the River-Defying Sect and the Sky River Court trembled as a sensation of crushing pressure began to weigh down on them.

Even the Gold Core cultivators up in midair looked shocked!

The young woman in treant form was also shaken. However, there was no time to ponder the situation at the moment. Instead, she focused fully on sending the battle-axe slashing down toward Bai Xiaochun.

Closer and closer it neared....

Bai Xiaochun's clothing and hair were even being destroyed by the power of the incoming battle-axe....

When the axe was only about nine meters away from Bai Xiaochun, his eyes suddenly snapped open, and when they did, a terrifying wind sprang up as the entire 50-kilometer area was filled with a watery swamp!!

“Waterswamp Kingdom!” he murmured, almost as if he were calling out to something or someone. Although his words were spoken softly, they caused even Nascent Soul cultivators to tremble.... A roar suddenly echoed out, a roar like that from ancient times, a roar that filled the world with profound ancientness!

Heaven and earth trembled as the roar increased in intensity. In the blink of an eye, heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling filled all creation. Every cultivator in the area was trembling, and the young woman in treant form had a look of complete and utter incredulity on her face.

The moment that look appeared on her face, and even as her battle-axe descended, the image of a huge spike suddenly appeared around Bai Xiaochun!

30 meters. 300 meters. 3,000 meters. 30,000 meters!

Rumbling sounds echoed out in all directions as the spike rose higher and higher. Furthermore, after it reached 30,000 meters in length, more rows of spikes became visible beneath it. All light dimmed, and a huge wind screamed across the lands!

The young woman had no chance to land a blow on Bai Xiaochun. The spike stabbed through her, and she screamed as she was pushed higher and higher into the sky!!

Even as despair washed through her, the young woman reverted from treant form back into human form. Blood sprayed out of her mouth, and her eyes began to grow dim. She was panting on the verge of death!

Powerful fluctuations rolled out across the lands. Just barely visible within the dense water vapor were row upon row of spikes, as well as an enormous body!

However, even the 50-kilometer wide swamp wasn't large enough to contain that enormous body, making it impossible for anyone to tell exactly what type of creature it was!

In any case, compared to that enormous creature, the young woman impaled on its spikes was almost too small to see....

All cultivators in the area looked on with total shock. The process didn't last long, only a few breaths' worth of time. Then the Waterswamp Kingdom creature let out a bellow before slowly fading away. The water vapor vanished, and everything returned

to normal. The pressure disappeared, and the body of the young woman fell down from the sky and landed in front of Bai Xiaochun with a thud.

Blood was oozing from wounds all over her body. She was now hovering on the brink of death, her eyes filled with bitterness and rage as she stared at Bai Xiaochun. Using her last bit of energy, she opened her mouth to curse him.

However, even as her lips moved, he waved his sleeve, and the blood sword which he had formed from Elder Zhou's blood slashed down and took off her head!

Her head tumbled off to the side, her eyes growing dim. She was dead in body and soul!

The blood sword slowly faded away....

Just as Bai Xiaochun had said, he used that sword to take her life away. Blood for blood!

Without saying a word, he collected her bag of holding, then sighed and turned to leave. However, it was in that very moment that an anguished howl echoed out from off in the distance.

“Junior Sister Tong!”

Chapter 336: Battling Core Formation!

The voice was completely beyond ordinary, and was accompanied by a gale-force wind that shook everything in the area. The ground around Bai Xiaochun shattered, and many objects in the area exploded.

Even Bai Xiaochun was badly shaken, and found himself staggering backward several steps from the force of the sound.

His face flickered as he looked up and saw a young man flying through the air toward him. He had long, wild hair, and his eyes burned red with killing intent as he closed in.

Although his speed couldn't be counted for much within the Gold Core stage, it was vastly beyond anything Foundation Establishment cultivators were capable of. The majestic sight caused Foundation Establishment cultivators from both sides of the conflict in the jungle to be completely shaken.

Soon, alarmed cries could be heard. "A Gold Core cultivator!!"

The River-Defying Sect had dispatched people to lock down all of the enemy Gold Core experts, to prevent them from attacking the Foundation Establishment cultivators.

And yet, for some unknown reason, a Gold Core cultivator had suddenly appeared right here, and was bearing down on Bai Xiaochun with murderous intentions. Some distance behind him was one of the River-Defying Sect's Gold Core cultivators, who was

racing to block his path.

However, even as the River-Defying Sect Gold Core elder was about to intercept the young man from the Sky River Court, the young man waved his hand, sending a green beam of light shooting backward. Moments later, a huge skybanyan treant emerged from the light!

The skybanyan treant was the young man's battle weapon, something that he normally would care for just as much as his own life. However, after summoning the battle weapon, the young man cried out in a frantic voice, "Buy me ten breaths of time, even if you have to pay for it with your life!!"

A tremor ran through the skybanyan treant, but it didn't hesitate for even a moment. Energy surging, it shot forward and blocked the Gold Core elder from the River-Defying Sect!

The young man's murderous aura surged sky-high as he shot toward Bai Xiaochun, his eyes so bloodshot they were almost bleeding. He had only been in the Gold Core stage for about half a year, but he was completely and utterly confident that he would only need ten breaths of time to kill a Foundation Establishment cultivator!

The sight of the young woman's severed head tumbling off to the side moments ago had filled him with intense pain. She had been his Daoist partner, his Junior Sister, and he had already sworn an oath to himself that he would personally kill the one responsible for her death.

“Die!!” he howled, smashing his hand toward Bai Xiaochun. The wave of his hand was backed by an early Gold Core cultivation base, causing a black palm to appear that screamed through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

It radiated a terrifying aura that no Foundation Establishment cultivator could possibly stand up against, and even caused the air to distort as it sped along.

In the face of such a murderous aura, Bai Xiaochun immediately began to fall back, his pupils constricting. A sense of deadly crisis overtook him, causing his flesh and blood to scream that he was in incredible danger!

There was no time to contemplate the situation, and he knew that he couldn’t rely on someone to intervene. Although people would come to rescue him eventually, he would have to hold out until that moment.

There was only one thought running through his mind at the moment....

“I can’t die here. If I want to stay alive, then I have to fight!!” Bai Xiaochun sped backward rapidly, performing a double-handed incantation gesture that summoned three huge violet cauldrons, along with numerous spirit enhanced flying swords, all of which flew to block the enormous hand.

BOOM!

Those three cauldrons could be considered astonishingly powerful in the Foundation Establishment stage, but the hand summoned by the Gold Core young man completely destroyed them one after another. As for the spirit enhanced flying swords, as soon as the hand touched them, they began to fall apart.

The hand destroyed them all like a hammer crushing ice cubes, then proceeded on toward Bai Xiaochun!

Intense rumbling sounds could be heard. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, and his entire body flickered with gold light as his Undying Skin erupted with power to defend against an early Gold Core attack. Although he was sent tumbling backward, he was not killed!

The killing intent in the young man's eyes grew stronger. Without uttering a single word, he advanced, viciously waving his sleeve to summon a black wind. The black wind quickly transformed into a black dragon, which let out a powerful roar as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

There was no time for thought or planning. Roaring, Bai Xiaochun opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, causing violet light to erupt out. At the same time, his little wooden sword appeared, shining with the dazzling silver light that came from multiple spirit enhancements. Bai Xiaochun wasn't just defending himself, he was fighting back!

When the power of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye locked onto the

black dragon, the dragon roared and began to struggle. Although intense pain stabbed through the eye into Bai Xiaochun, he continued to unleash its power until the black dragon began to show signs of imminent destruction.

Lips twisted into a sneer, the young man said, “Can the light of a tiny firefly dare to contend with the glory of the shining moon?!”

With that, he advanced again. At the same time, rumbling sounds could be heard as the black dragon began to grow larger, sloughing off the effects of the Heavenspan Dharma eye. Bai Xiaochun coughed up some blood, and blood even began to ooze out of his third eye.

The little wooden sword continued to speed through the air, and when it hit the black dragon, a booming sound could be heard. The Gold Core young man’s eyes then went wide as he saw the sword pass completely through the dragon.

However, it was merely a stab wound. The difference in cultivation base between Bai Xiaochun and the young man was too vast. Without even a pause, the black dragon roared and headed toward Bai Xiaochun.

The dragon hadn’t even touched him, and yet his entire body was wracked with pain. Even his bones felt like they were creaking, and his qi and blood were in chaos. Madness began to rise up in his eyes.

Off in the distance, he could see several beams of light racing

urgently toward him; clearly, those were the patriarchs coming to rescue him....

Unfortunately, they were too far off. If he couldn't continue to hang on for a little bit longer, the patriarchs wouldn't be able to help him. Although he feared death, he was also aware that such fear would do him no good right now!

“Asura Body!” he roared. His Undying Gold Skin was operating at full power, causing golden light to shine out from him in all directions. At the same time, the manifestation of the second volume of the Undying Codex, the Asura Body, appeared. Instantly, his fleshly body power rocketed up as he prepared to face the incoming black dragon.

A huge boom filled the air when the dragon slammed into his chest. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and the dragon collapsed into numerous strands of black mist. Bai Xiaochun's body trembled on the verge of collapse as he was thrown backward. Even as he did, a shout of rage could be heard from the young man, who burst through the remnants of the black dragon toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the blink of an eye, the young man's palm was bearing down on Bai Xiaochun's chest!

In the moment before it struck, enraged shouts could be heard from the patriarchs. Heaven and earth shook violently, and the Gold Core youth began to tremble. However, he ignored everything around them, gritting his teeth as he shoved his palm forward.

“You’re dead!!”

Madness could be seen in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes as well. He knew that there was no way he could avoid this blow. Therefore, he raised his right hand, and black light shimmered from his thumb and index finger as he sent the Throat Crushing Grasp toward the young man!

But then, rumbling echoed out as the young man grabbed Bai Xiaochun’s right hand with his left and twisted it to the side. Cracking sounds could be heard as bones were broken, and pain surged through Bai Xiaochun. An expression of madness twisted his face; clearly, he was about to do something completely outrageous. Even as his right arm was wrenched to the side, and a palm strike was about to land on his chest, he used the Mountain Shaking Bash!

It was a case of even if I die, I’m going to make sure you feel some pain!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the Mountain Shaking Bash was unleashed, and Bai Xiaochun shot forward. He couldn’t prevent his hand from being crushed, nor could he block the incoming palm strike. So, he chose to simply body-slam the Gold Core youth!

Even as the destructive palm strike slammed into his chest, a black glow could be seen as the turtle-wok appeared to defend him. Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth; he had been injured,

but not killed!

“That’s all you’ve got?!” Bai Xiaochun said, smiling even as blood oozed out of his mouth. His vision was blurred, and he could barely move. Since that was the case, he decided that he might as well use what little energy he had left to force his nine spiritual seas to merge together!

If he did that, he would reach the Gold Core stage!

Normally, such an act would be preceded by much preparation, but as of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was going to attempt to force it to happen!

As for his Gold Core opponent, after being hit by the Mountain Shaking Bash, he was flung backward, and coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. Then he looked over at Bai Xiaochun with complete disbelief and shock.

“A Foundation Establishment cultivator can actually hurt me? And that wok, it actually blocked my extermination strike?!” The young man’s killing intent grew stronger than ever when he realized that Bai Xiaochun was still not dead. Madness gleamed in his eyes, and he gritted his teeth. Despite the fact that people were only moments away from intervening and rescuing his target, he drew upon the full power of his Gold Core cultivation base and shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Considering that Bai Xiaochun was so grievously wounded, he was sure that one final attack would be enough to kill him!

This was his last chance to kill Bai Xiaochun before he himself was killed!

“I might die, but you’re going to die first!” he roared, picking up speed!

—

Chapter 337: Gold Sun!

Bai Xiaochun's consciousness was fading. At the same time, everything around him seemed to slow down. He suddenly found himself thinking about how he used to light incense on Mount Hood, and everything that happened in the Spirit Stream Sect, the Blood Stream Sect, and then the River-Defying Sect....

As those memories flashed through his mind, he smiled.

It was a smile of both bitterness and helplessness.

He practiced cultivation in order to live forever, and yet, in pursuit of that goal, he always ended up in deadly crises. The slightest mistake in such a situation could lead to him losing his poor little life.

It was somewhat of a paradox.

“To live forever,” he murmured, “you don’t just have to struggle against the heavens, you have to fight other people. It’s a narrow, rugged path to walk, a path that most people give up on. Many people meet defeat, or end up losing their way....

“Living forever.... That’s the whole reason I started to practice cultivation. To live forever....

“Live forever.... I’m going to live forever!!” Suddenly, everything became incredibly clear. Although he felt incredibly weak at the

moment, he was completely focused on living forever. That one simple thought continued to fill his mind, like the rumblings of thunder!

“I can’t count on other people all the time. I have to get stronger! Only if I get strong enough can I make sure that nobody interferes with my will to live forever!!” Bai Xiaochun trembled as his heart and mind roared, causing his nine spiritual seas to begin to rage and emit thunderous rumblings.

The Heaven-Dao aura which had built up in his nine spiritual seas throughout Foundation Establishment suddenly erupted out. It was like a string, connecting all of the nine spiritual seas and drawing them together into one!!

Bai Xiaochun had already been in a position to begin the process of reaching Gold Core. Now, being completely focused on his desire to live forever, and with his life actually being on the line, he was ready to break through!

“Live forever!!” Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and roared, and as he did, his nine spiritual seas erupted with shocking energy, energy that surged out of him and connected to heaven and earth!

The Heaven-Dao aura caused colors to flash in the sky, and a huge wind to kick up. An enormous, swirling vortex appeared overhead, so large that the entire Sky River Court was covered!

The sudden appearance of the rumbling vortex caused many people look up and then involuntarily gasp!

Even as the wind swept around Bai Xiaochun, bolts of lightning appeared up above, as well as an illusory scene that looked something like nine seas.

It was in that exact moment that his Gold Core opponent closed in with killing intent surging. Even as he reached out to attack, his face fell, and the energy surging from Bai Xiaochun battered him backward by over 30 meters!

“You....” the young man said, his face a mask of disbelief. What shocked him was not the fact that Bai Xiaochun was choosing this moment to step into Core Formation, but rather, that this type of Core Formation was something completely different than anything he had ever seen before!

Never before had he ever seen such strange signs and portents appear in heaven and earth during Core Formation.

Bai Xiaochun hadn’t even actually reached Core Formation, and yet the mere pressure and aura was so powerful that he couldn’t get close. The young Gold Core cultivator was completely and utterly taken aback.

He wasn’t the only one. Everyone in the area was shocked beyond belief!

“That....”

“That’s....”

“That’s a Heaven-Dao aura. Don’t tell me... don’t tell me he’s going to reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core!?!?”

The Nascent Soul Daoist masters from the Sky River Court were also shocked, and some of them even had looks of jealousy on their faces.

Heaven-Dao Gold Core was something out of legend!

The term Gold Core was actually a blanket term often applied to different levels. The Core Formation stage was more properly classified into the heaven, earth, and mortal varieties. The Mortal-Dao of men led to Mortal Core. Earth-Dao led to Earth Core. And Heaven-Dao led to Gold Core!

Only Heaven-Dao Gold Core could truly be considered Gold Core!

The only way to reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core was to start out in Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment. And yet, being in Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment wasn’t a guarantee of being able to reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

Heaven-Dao Gold Core experts were as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns, and not a single one had appeared in the last 10,000 years, not even in the Middle Reaches. The crushing pressure exerted by the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage was something that could only be read about in the ancient records.

Although the Nascent Soul patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect weren't as surprised as everyone else, they were still taken aback. They knew that Bai Xiaochun was in the Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment stage, but that didn't necessarily mean that he would reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

There was always a chance that he would fail, but if he succeeded, and formed a Heaven-Dao Gold Core, then it would mean his future potential was almost limitless, and he would also be capable of crushing anyone else in the same stage as him!

The battlefield suddenly went quiet. The Heaven-Dao aura which was now crushing down on everyone ensured that all fighting stopped!

All eyes were looking in the direction of Bai Xiaochun. Not even a deva would be able to interfere with the process of Heaven-Dao Gold Core, and if they tried, they would be punished by the heavens!

Failure or success would not depend on any outside force, only on the person striving to reach Core Formation!

As everyone watched, the crashing of thunder grew louder and louder in the sky above. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's ninth sea began to merge with the eighth, and at the same time, the first sea merged with the second!

As the four seas merged together, colors flashed in the sky, the

wind screamed, and the pressure grew more intense. Even the Nascent Soul cultivators were panting.

“The merging has started....”

“The process of breaking through from Foundation Establishment into Gold Core involves merging the spiritual seas. To start out by merging four together is the best. Merging six spiritual seas at the beginning is rare, and for someone to merge eight would be rare even in the Upper Reaches riversource sects!”

“Bai Xiaochun already has four of the seas merged together....” The Gold Core and Nascent Soul cultivators were all looking up at the signs in the sky, and commenting among themselves.

However, many of the cultivators from the Sky River Court actually sighed in relief when they saw that Bai Xiaochun had only merged four of the seas.

“A mere four merged spiritual seas means that he will fail to reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core!” The Sky River Court cultivators weren’t the only ones to realize this; the patriarchs from the River-Defying Sect were now starting to get nervous.

As the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect, the patriarchs viewed him with utmost importance. They had originally planned to do everything in their power to help Bai Xiaochun reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core after the battle was over.

But then, something unexpected had happened, and Bai Xiaochun was forcing Core Formation in the middle of the fighting. To the River-Defying Sect, this unexpected event was turning out to be a big setback.

However, it was at this point that, all of a sudden, cries of shock began to rise up.

“He’s not stopping at four!!”

“Another merging is taking place!!”

Two spiritual seas had merged on the top, and two on the bottom. But now, the first two spiritual seas were beginning to merge with the third!

And that wasn’t the end of it! The eighth and ninth spiritual seas were slowly beginning to join together with the seventh!

As that happened, the Heaven-Dao aura grew even more intense, suppressing the cultivation bases of all cultivators, and even throwing them into chaos.

More and more cries of shock rang out.

“How could this be happening?!?!” The Sky River Court cultivators were completely shocked, especially the young Gold Core expert who had been trying to kill Bai Xiaochun moments ago. That young man was trembling, his expression that of

complete disbelief, and his heart was filled with regret at the realization that he had provoked a monster.

“Six seas!!” Patriarch Frigidsect from the Spirit Stream Division and Master Godwind of the Blood Stream Division were both overjoyed. The other patriarchs had the same reaction, and as for Li Qinghou and the other Gold Core cultivators, they were watching with wide eyes.

And yet, before the uproar could even commence, something else happened up above in the sky!

The first three spiritual seas began to merge into the fourth!

Simultaneously, the seventh through ninth spiritual seas began to connect to the sixth!

Everything was changing!

The bottom four spiritual seas and the top four spiritual seas were drawing closer together, and between all of them was the fifth spiritual sea!

Although the fifth spiritual sea didn't seem to be doing anything at all, it was obvious that all nine of the spiritual seas were merging together!!

The Heaven-Dao pressure grew stronger than ever, exploding out into the entire area with unprecedented intensity!

That pressure was almost like a natural protection offered to anyone stepping into the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage. As the pressure roiled out, something else happened that no one noticed. The ancient gravekeeper appeared high up in the sky. First, he looked at the spiritual seas, then down at Bai Xiaochun....

Everyone watched as the nine spiritual seas slowly converged upon each other; as they did, they began to form a shape....

Clearly, that shape was a circle!!

The nine golden spiritual seas were completely eye-catching. To everyone who was looking at them, they seemed almost like a golden sun!

It was a true and authentic Gold Core!

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Chapter 338: Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

Qi Condensation. Foundation Establishment. Core Formation!

In the Lower Reaches, the gaps between those three stages were like enormous gorges that separated the cultivators into groups. With the exception of some extreme circumstances, someone in a higher stage could easily crush anyone from a lower stage!

During Qi Condensation, cultivators absorbed the energy of heaven and earth and then transformed it into rivers and lakes. During Foundation Establishment, those rivers and lakes became spiritual seas, giving the cultivators such strength that Qi Condensation couldn't even compare to it!

Overall, that transformation wasn't so much an improvement in the quality of the power, just the sheer amount!

However, Core Formation was different!

After crystallizing the spiritual seas and then merging them together into a core, unprecedented levels of battle prowess could be unleashed. Furthermore, it wasn't just a situation of increasing the amount of power; the quality was also vastly improved!

Depending on how many spiritual seas were merged together, different types of cores could be formed: Mortal Core, Earth Core, and of course, Gold Core!

If Bai Xiaochun were not a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator, but had traveled the more common path of Earthstring Foundation Establishment, then at this point he would have formed an Earth Core.

But he was different. He was a Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivator, and as such, he walked the path of the Heaven-Dao Gold Core!!

A Heaven-Dao aura was spreading out in all directions, causing crushing pressure to weigh down on cultivators of the Sky River Court and the River-Defying Sect alike. Everyone was forced to stop fighting, and none of them could even emit cultivation base fluctuations.

It was as if some mysterious natural law was at work!

Gasps rang out without cease across the field of battle, and countless eyes were all focused on the enormous Gold Core which hovered in the air above Bai Xiaochun!

Everyone was shocked, but different thoughts were going through the minds of different people. For example, Shangguan Tianyou's hands were clenched into fists, and a defiant gleam could be seen in his eyes. Not only was he jealous, he simply refused to admit that he was falling behind.

Song Que was also trembling, and his heart was filled with anything but calm. However, even he wasn't sure exactly what he was feeling as he watched Bai Xiaochun. It was similar with all the

other Chosen.

Zhou Xinqi, Ghostfang, Master God-Diviner, the three blood masters, as well as Nine-Isles from the Profound Stream Division, were all people who fully deserved to be called Chosen. However, they were now being forced to watch Bai Xiaochun rise to prominence, the first among their generation to reach Core Formation. The emotions which rose up in their hearts were complicated and difficult to put into words.

Then there was Chen Manyao from the Pill Stream Division. A strange look could be seen in her eyes, and since no one was paying attention to her, no one saw as she slowly lifted her right hand. However, even as she did that, a gaze from afar locked down onto her, a gaze filled with iciness and menace.

A tremor ran through Chen Manyao as she suddenly felt extremely cold. Looking around, she realized that the person who was looking at her was one of the disciples of the Spirit Stream Division, the same person she had seen on the Heavenspan River back at the Blood Stream Division headquarters. It was a young woman named Gongsun Wan'er!

As various thoughts ran through various minds, a sound suddenly crashed out from within the nine spiritual seas, a sound that surpassed heavenly thunder!

RUMBLE!

All light went dim, and all hearts were shaken. It was as if the

heavens were roaring. At the same time, a bolt of golden lightning shot out from the clouds above, filling the air around the nine spiritual seas and transforming into countless hands that shoved against them!

In response, the nine merged spiritual seas began to shrink down!

Among the forces of the Sky River Court, the most powerful cultivator, the old man who was half a step into the Deva Realm, suddenly blurted, “Nine lightning bolts smelt the core!!”

In almost the exact same moment, the Nascent Soul patriarchs from the River-Defying Sect also began to cry out.

“It really is Heaven-Dao Gold Core! In the moment of this type of Core Formation, the heavens form lightning that assists in the smelting of the core itself!”

“It seems like assistance, but the truth is it’s like a Tribulation! Only by withstanding nine strikes of lightning can success be had....”

Even as the hubbub of conversation echoed out, the nine spiritual seas shrank down, and Bai Xiaochun trembled. Blood began to ooze out of his mouth, and a terrifying aura radiated out from him. That aura seemed like an aura of complete madness; if he made the slightest mistake, he would be destroyed. Not only would he fail to succeed at his Core Formation, but he would be ripped to shreds, destroyed in body and soul!

Attempting to reach Core Formation without being fully prepared was an extremely dangerous task!

When the River-Defying Sect cultivators saw blood oozing out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, they started to get even more nervous than before. However, they could do nothing to help him. Outsiders could not interfere during Heaven-Dao Gold Core Formation. Everything was up to Bai Xiaochun and Bai Xiaochun alone.

His eyes were completely bloodshot as he looked up into the sky at the spiritual seas, which was also the exact moment when another crackling boom filled the air.

RUMBLE!

A second golden lightning bolt appeared, even bigger than the last one. As it descended, it wrapped around the nine spiritual seas and began to crush them with pressure!

Things weren't over yet, though. A third boom came, then a fourth and a fifth. Each golden lightning bolt which appeared was bigger than the last, and the pressure they exerted onto the nine spiritual seas caused them to shrink down rapidly. Soon, the core formed by the spiritual seas was only about 300 meters wide, and it glittered with golden light!

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was trembling, and blood was pouring out of his eyes, nose, and ears. He truly seemed like he was hovering on the verge of collapse.

And yet, the end had not yet been reached. A sixth boom could be heard, then a seventh. More golden lightning appeared, and the nine spiritual seas seemed to be trembling on the verge of collapse, as if they might explode at any moment!

Six bolts of lightning were difficult enough, but then a seventh appeared, and a Heaven-Dao aura even more shocking than before spread out. The core formed by the merged spiritual seas began to ripple and distort!

By now, the spiritual seas had shrunk from 300 meters to 30, and looked more than ever like they might collapse.

“Xiaochun!!” More than one person among the River-Defying Sect was calling out Bai Xiaochun’s name. That was especially true of those who were his close friends. They were more nervous than anyone. Hou Yunfei, Big Fatty Zhang, and Li Qinghou were all wracked with anxiety. Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan seemed completely on edge.

In sharp contrast, the cultivators of the Sky River Court were already beginning to sigh with relief now that it seemed that the Core Formation process was going to fail. That was especially true of the Core Formation youth who had been fighting Bai Xiaochun. A vicious smile spread out on his face, and the regret in his heart began to fade. He began to sigh with relief, and killing intent once again rose up in his eyes.

“So, it seems I won’t even need to do anything. I can just watch him die!”

However, even as the sigh of relief left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and struggled to lift his head, staring up at the nine spiritual seas as an eighth rumbling sound caused heaven and earth to shake!

As the deafening sound spread out, an eighth golden lightning bolt appeared, larger and wider than any of the previous ones. It looked like a golden dragon as it wrapped around the nine spiritual seas and began to crush them!

Heavenly lightning was shaking the sky!

The Gold Core formed from the nine spiritual seas shrank from 30 meters down to a mere 3. The core rippled and distorted out of shape, and cracks could even be seen on its surface!

Bai Xiaochun was trembling so hard that blood was seeping out of his pores, turning him crimson. His eyes were bloodshot and filled with madness. That was when his Undying Live Forever Technique kicked into effect, and golden light spread out from him. Behind him, his Asura Body manifested!

“Form!!” he shouted. Booms like thunder filled him, and his life force power erupted, healing him. After the eighth lightning bolt vanished, the Gold Core formed from his nine spiritual seas was still there, and it was no longer misshapen!

People gasped loudly in shock, but even as they did, a rumbling crash filled the sky, the ninth!

“The last lightning bolt!!” said Master Godwind softly, even as he shook visibly.

“Either he succeeds, or he dies!” said the old man from the Sky River Court, his voice low. As he looked at Bai Xiaochun, mixed emotions could be seen on his face. He knew that if Bai Xiaochun successfully reached Heaven-Dao Gold Core, then as long as he didn’t meet an unexpected end, he would surely reach Nascent Soul, and most likely, the Deva Realm!

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Chapter 339: Making Contact With The Second Shackle!

Intense rumbling sounds could be heard as the ninth bolt of golden lightning shot through the air. It was far larger than any of the preceding lightning bolts, and caused the entire sky to turn the color of gold as it sped toward Bai Xiaochun's three-meter Gold Core.

The crushing pressure exuded by that lightning bolt was both the strongest and the final round!

Bai Xiaochun let out a long cry as he released all the power of his cultivation base. His Undying techniques were in full swing, and his will, soul, and everything else about him was completely and utterly focused. Nothing else in the world even existed at the moment. His mind was devolving into chaos, and yet, there was one thing that remained....

“I must form this Gold Core! I want to live forever!!” Without even realizing what he was doing, he threw his head back and roared, then shot up into the air toward the Gold Core.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

From a distance, it was just possible to see him arriving at the Gold Core at the exactly the same time as the bolt of lightning!

As of this moment, heaven and earth were turning blurry, the

sky was shaking, and the land was being rocked back and forth!

As of this moment, so much golden light filled the world that it became the only color in existence!

As of this moment, it was almost impossible to even distinguish Bai Xiaochun from the lightning, as both merged into the Gold Core!

As of this moment, every person on the battlefield was completely focused on the events playing out above!

No longer was the lightning visible, nor Bai Xiaochun. Not even the Gold Core itself could be seen.

The only thing it was possible to see now was a field of endless gold!

No one was able to determine whether Bai Xiaochun had succeeded. The ancient records didn't contain detailed information about what could happen in a scenario like this. They only contained a general overview; currently, no one had any idea to judge what was happening.

The only thing they could do now was wait!

The Heaven-Dao pressure slowly began to dissipate, and the golden light started to fade....

Everyone was looking anxiously up into the sky, countless thoughts running through their minds. However, all of them realized that this would likely be both the first and last time any of them ever saw someone reach Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

It was the same in both the River-Defying Sect and the Sky River Court.

As for the young man who had been fighting Bai Xiaochun earlier, he was shaking all over. The idea of Bai Xiaochun reaching Heaven-Dao Gold Core filled him with a level of dread he could never have even imagined before.

“There’s no way he’s going to succeed!” he shouted to himself, his expression distorting with rage. “There’s no way!!”

However, even as the young man shouted to himself, the gold light faded away completely, and everyone caught sight of Bai Xiaochun!

There he hovered, his eyes closed, his hair floating around him, his arms outstretched. Golden light shone from him, making him look like a celestial being. Everyone was completely shaken.

That was when his eyes suddenly snapped open!

Instantly, rumblings like thunder echoed out in all directions, and at the same time, terrifying cultivation base fluctuations rolled

out.

That was something that a Foundation Establishment cultivator could not accomplish. That was something that came only with the power of a Gold Core!!

“Impossible!” the young man cried, his mind spinning. Cries of alarm rang out from the Sky River Court, whereas cheering could be heard from the River-Defying Sect.

“Did it work!?!?”

“Junior Patriarch!!”

“Xiaochun!!”

Even as the cheers rang out, Bai Xiaochun hovered there, somewhat in a daze. He could sense the cultivation base power coursing through him, and felt his previous injuries and wounds vanishing. The power he was experiencing was not just from his fleshly body; it was a comprehensive power that gave him the feeling that a mere wave of his hand could crush everything around him.

“So, this is Gold Core, huh...?” he murmured. He could clearly sense that the nine spiritual seas inside of him were gone, and had been replaced by a spinning Gold Core!

This was true Heaven-Dao Gold Core!

Every time the Gold Core spun, it released more power than the last time. As the cultivation base power poured through him, his body underwent a heaven-shaking, earth-toppling transformation.

It wasn't just an addition to his longevity; he was ascending to a higher form of life. Everything around him now looked different than before.

There were more colors, everything was more crisp and detailed, and he seemed closer to everything!!

Furthermore, a Heaven-Dao aura erupted out from him that far surpassed the aura from his days in Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment. It connected him to heaven and earth in such a way that he almost felt as if he had the power to summon heavenly lightning!

There was another indescribable feeling that existed inside of him, something like what he had experienced in the world of the Blood Ancestor. It was almost as if he were being doted upon by heaven and earth; when he looked up into the sky, it seemed strangely familiar to him.

“Gold Core!!” Clenching his hands into fists, he threw his head back and let loose a long cry. Everything around him shook, and the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect began to cheer even more loudly than before.

“I think I can keep going!” he thought. Taking a deep breath, he

sent his Undying Live Forever Technique into motion. Shockingly, an asura appeared behind him, then a second, a third, and a fourth....

One asura after another appeared, causing his energy to skyrocket. By this point, he was already far beyond the ordinary early Core Formation level. Everyone, especially the Chosen, were completely shocked.

“He’s... he’s going to keep going?”

“How is this possible?!?!”

“That’s fleshly body power. Don’t tell me he’s going to form a fleshly body Gold Core?!?!” Numerous onlookers were crying out in shock.

Stepping into Core Formation in the middle of a battlefield was a shocking thing in and of itself. But then he actually reached Heaven-Dao Gold Core, and after that, continued to increase his fleshly body power. The cultivators of both the River-Defying Sect and the Sky River Court were so shocked that they were going into a daze.

Even as they went silent, a fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and finally, a ninth asura appeared behind him. Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as the energy of nine asuras caused everything to shake violently.

Bai Xiaochun's breakthrough was not limited to his cultivation base; he was actually making progress with his Undying Asura Body!

The nine asuras were like nine Dharma Idols, surrounding Bai Xiaochun and roaring into the heavens just like he was.

It was a sound that surpassed heavenly thunder, and caused everyone to be shaken to the core. Even the plants in the jungle were trembling, and all Qi Condensation, Foundation Establishment, and ordinary Core Formation cultivators felt their cultivation bases teetering unstably.

Gasps and cries of astonishment could be heard everywhere!

But then, a tenth asura appeared next to the ninth one, and a massive tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun.

It was in that moment that he could sense a shackle inside of him!!

"The five great shackles...." he murmured to himself. He had already broken through the first shackle back when he had mastered the Undying Skin. Now, the second shackle had appeared!

Although he couldn't break through it at the moment, he could at least make contact!

To him, it felt as if four enormous mountains were weighing down onto him. It was something he couldn't detect before, but now his senses were heightened, and the feeling couldn't be clearer. He suddenly had the urge to destroy those mountains, to break free and truly rise up!

“I'm almost at the point of achieving the Undying Heavenly King Body. Once that happens, I can form an Undying Heavenly King Core!” As he thought back to the details of the second volume of the Undying Codex, his eyes shone with anticipation, and his heart thumped with excitement. At that point, he looked down at the young man he had been fighting before, who was now trembling with terror.

Almost as soon as their gazes met, the Heaven-Dao aura vanished, and the pressure faded away.

The young man's hair began to stand on end, and he started to back up. He really had no choice other than to give up on the fight; as of this moment, Bai Xiaochun filled him with indescribable terror.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun was looking directly at him caused his heart to pound wildly. That gaze was like two sharp swords stabbing into his heart and mind, causing his Earth Core to shake.

In the same moment that the young man turned to flee, several streams of divine sense, as well as a group of cultivators, began to race toward him from the Sky River Court to save him. However, Bai Xiaochun was much closer to him than they were. He already had shocking speed back in Foundation Establishment, and now

that he was in Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he was even faster!

“You’re not getting away!” he said, his voice as cold as ice. The young man had forced him to take the dangerous and potentially deadly choice of forcing Core Formation early. As a result, Bai Xiaochun’s killing intent surged with complete intensity.

He took a step forward, and wings sprouted behind him. The Mountain Shaking Bash gave him an explosive burst of speed, causing him to leave behind afterimages and a series of sonic booms. In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of the young Core Formation cultivator!

“You just hit me with a palm strike. Now it’s my turn!” His voice echoed out like the winter wind as he reached his hand back and then sent his palm flying toward the young man.

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Chapter 340: One Palm Eradicates Core Formation!

The palm strike caused an illusory golden wave to sweep through the air, and thunder to boom up above. It contained the power of Bai Xiaochun's Heaven-Dao Gold Core, as well as fleshly body power that had already made contact with the second shackle. It was a domineering power that no one in the same cultivation stage as him could possibly stand up to.

The young Core Formation cultivator let out a howl like a caged animal. The sensation of deadly crisis he felt caused his heart to tremble. In his madness, he realized that he couldn't flee, and that his only chance to get out of the situation alive was to withstand this palm strike. Suddenly, he was in almost the exact opposite situation as before!

There was little time to consider the situation at the moment. Howling, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a vast array of magical items. Then he performed an incantation gesture, and stabbed his finger toward Bai Xiaochun. He even went to the lengths of spitting his own Earth Core out of his mouth!

"I refuse to believe that you can kill me right after you stepped into Core Formation!!" he shrieked.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes shone with intense coldness as his hand shot forward with lightning-like speed. When it made contact with the magical items, they couldn't stand up to the power for even a moment. They were destroyed like dried twigs as Bai Xiaochun's palm sped forward to the young man.

Then the palm made contact with the young man's extended finger, and it was almost instantly blotted out of existence. As the golden Heaven-Dao power reduced it to ashes, the young man screamed miserably. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't pause for even a moment; his palm continued forward, smashing into the young man's Earth Core!

Instantly, rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth, and the Earth Core collapsed into nothing more than fragments. Blood sprayed out of the young man's mouth, and a look of despair filled his eyes as Bai Xiaochun's palm made contact with his chest!

"You want me dead? How about I kill you first!?" Bai Xiaochun's words were spoken softly, but they were filled with a ferocity that could chill the soul.

Even before he finished speaking, his words were drowned out by a blood-curdling scream....

The young man was shoved backward, tumbling through the air. Before he could come to a stop, his body exploded, sending a rain of blood spattering all over the Sky River Court Core Formation cultivators who had come to aid him.

From the moment Bai Xiaochun began to strike out until the end of the fight, only a moment had passed. Quick and efficient!

The Core Formation cultivators who had just arrived were clearly shocked. Only now did they understand how truly frightening a

Heaven-Dao Gold Core expert was!

He had only just stepped into Core Formation, and could already cut down someone in the same level. Furthermore, he had completely dominated his opponent. How could these other Core Formation cultivators be anything other than astonished?

Everything went silent for a moment, after which the River-Defying Sect cultivators began to cheer again as their fighting spirits rose. As for Bai Xiaochun, he hovered there, looking up at the Nascent Soul cultivators some distance off.

For the first time, he felt that he wasn't so far removed from them after all.

Master Godwind from the Blood Stream Division threw his head back and laughed uproariously. "Children of the River-Defying Sect," he cried, "attack with full force! Storm the Sky River Court!"

In response, the River-Defying Sect cultivators located in the jungle on either side of the river all roared and began to attack!

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then caused a blood-colored light to explode out from him that vastly exceeded what he was capable of in Foundation Establishment. As it spread out, the cultivators of the Blood Stream Division yet again found their battle prowess increasing!!

Rumbling could be heard as the fighting resumed in full force,

and in ever more bitter and deadly fashion than before!

From high up in the air, it was possible to see River-Defying Sect cultivators swarming through the jungle on both banks of the river. They were like two sharp blades, slicing toward the Sky River Court headquarters with deadly abandon.

The Sky River Court couldn't fight back for much longer. They were being pushed back relentlessly, and the signs of imminent defeat were clear!

That was when an emerald green lantern suddenly flew out from the Sky River Court. As it rose into the air, it grew larger and larger, until it was fully 300 meters tall, and emanated shocking pressure. Surrounding the lantern were countless vengeful spirits, who let out vicious screams as they flew with the lantern toward the left bank of the river.

That lantern was none other than one of the Sky River Court's precious treasures!

Before the lantern could fly very far, a black sun shot up from the right bank of the river. Inside of the sun was a white raven, whose opened eyes emanated intensely cold light. It let out a cry that could shake the soul as it shot toward the lantern!

As the pace of the battle increased, the time had arrived for the River-Defying Sect to release their reserve powers. Of course, a reserve power like the black sun was little more than a precious treasure to the Sky River Court.

When the precious treasure and the reserve power closed in on each other, a huge gravestone, hundreds of meters tall, appeared in the air above the right bank. It instantly began to smash down toward the ground, emanating a profoundly archaic air. As it descended, the ground down below began to bulge up, as if it were forming a grave.

Then, a withered hand shot up from the dirt, and a hoarse howl echoed out over the right bank.

How could the River-Defying Sect not be prepared for something like this, though? As soon as the gravestone appeared, a white sun shot up over the right bank, within which was a black raven. It let out a piercing cry as it shot toward the gravestone. As it neared, the hand which had emerged from the dirt dissolved into ash, and a face floated out from the gravestone. Howling, the face shot toward the white sun as if to consume it.

The fighting was proceeding with utter intensity as reserve powers and precious treasures were unleashed. Cultivators fought fiercely with other cultivators. Slowly but surely, the River-Defying Sect was pushing the Sky River Court back, and getting closer and closer to the Sky River Court headquarters itself!

The time had come for the third offensive, the assault on the headquarters!

As the offensive proceeded, large numbers of River-Defying Sect cultivators poured out of the jungle and began to fight on the Dire

Skybanyan itself!

Booms rang out. The light of magical techniques rose up into the air. Bitter screams echoed here and there.

The battle between the patriarchs was growing more intense. People on both sides were receiving grievous injuries, and yet none of them were willing to back down, and instead, began to fight with even more madness.

Battles were going on between the Gold Core cultivators everywhere, both on the river banks and within the sect headquarters itself!

Bai Xiaochun was no longer tangling with the Foundation Establishment cultivators. Instead, he was higher up, battling the Core Formation cultivators from the Sky River Court. The River-Defying Sect had already had the upper hand in that regard, so there was little danger involved for him. Furthermore, it was giving him valuable experience in fighting other Core Formation cultivators.

As his battle prowess continued to climb, the Core Formation cultivators of the Sky River Court were increasingly shocked.

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Meanwhile, on a towering mountain some distance away from the Sky River Court, three figures materialized. Despite the

distance, they were able to clearly see everything that was happening on the field of battle.

Two of those figures were men, and one was a woman. The woman was beautiful, and emanated an aura that resembled the starry sky itself. She was there in illusory form, sometimes taking clear shape, sometimes blurring visibly. Anyone who stared at her too long would feel themselves growing dizzy.

Of the other two men, one was middle-aged, and emanated a pulsing black mist that formed into the shape of numerous black skulls. The grass near the man was all dead, and even the rocks were beginning to decay. Clearly, that black mist contained shocking power, and closely resembled devil qi!

Finally, there was an old man wearing a Daoist robe. He bore the demeanor of a transcendent being, and possessed a profound and mysterious aura. Anyone who got close to him would be able to hear a faint sound like the music of a Dao.

These three people came from the other three great sects in the Middle Reaches, the Starry River Court, the Polarity River Court, and the Dao River Court!

The woman who was phasing in and out of visibility, she came from the Starry River Court, which was widely known to wield the power of the starry sky! The man with the devil qi came from the Polarity River Court, which was widely regarded as a devilish sect! As for the old man, he came from the top sect in the Middle Reaches, the Dao River Court!

“The Sky River Court will be defeated this day. Interesting.”

“It seems our new neighbors aren’t weaklings, either. That will make things a bit more fun.”

“They even have a Heaven-Dao Gold Core cultivator. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will surely take note of that....”

“You know, since the Sky River Court is going to meet defeat, their shares will need to be redistributed....”

The three of them exchanged slight, knowing smiles. Apparently, their true hope was that neither side came out truly victorious.

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Chapter 341: The True Spirit Awakens!

The fighting was getting more bitter than ever. Of course, the casualties on the Sky River Court side far outmatched those of the River-Defying Sect. People were being injured or killed almost every moment, leading to taciturn silence within the Sky River Court itself.

In the very center of the Sky River Court was a tree growing upon the larger tree. At the crown of that smaller tree was a log cabin, outside of which stood an old man in a white robe, who was looking out at the fighting. The booms and screams of battle were clearly audible from his position.

He seemed completely exhausted, and if one were to look closely at him, an aura of death could be detected. He seemed to be on the verge of breathing his last breath.

Next to the old man was a handsome boy with rosy lips and white teeth. He was almost pretty, and even emanated a fragrant aroma. He wore fresh, clean clothes, and almost looked like a celestial creature of some sort. He had his hands clasped behind his back as he studied the battlefield. He seemed particularly interested in Bai Xiaochun.

After a long moment passed, the old man spoke in a voice hoarse from exhaustion. “Fellow Daoist Li, haven’t things gone on long enough?”

The boy smiled and looked over at the old man. “Oh no, not quite

yet.” He sighed. “Fellow Daoist Chen, if you had known things would turn out this way, would you have repented of your sins earlier?”

The old man stood there quietly for a moment. Then his eyes went a bit dimmer, and he said, “When will enough be enough? Plenty of people have died already.”

After a moment of thought, the boy smiled and said, “Fine, fine. How about this: produce your Sky River Court reserve power. Once it’s destroyed, we can end the punishment.”

The old man seemed to tire even further. Many people had actually come to assume that he was dead already. However, as the true patriarch of the Sky River Court, this old man was in the Deva Realm, and had numerous means by which to prolong his life, even after receiving a grievous injury. Despite being like an oil lamp about to wink out, he was still able to continue living.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect didn’t want to completely eradicate the Sky River Court. Rather, they wanted this old man to watch it being destroyed. They wanted him to understand that this was his punishment. Only after enough cultivators had died could the remaining disciples have a chance to keep on living.

The old man sighed, and then reached out and tapped the tree trunk next to him.

The tree shivered, and the effect rapidly spread out. In the blink of an eye, the entire Dire Skybanyan was shaking. Then, countless

white insects began to crawl out from inside of the tree!

Each insect was only about the size of a finger, but they let out piercing cries, along with powerful auras. As soon as they appeared, they began to fly up into the sky.

This development caused an immediate stir. The fighting stopped momentarily as swarms of the creatures flew up out of the Dire Skybanyan. It only took moments before they blotted out the sky; it was a completely hair-raising sight.

Among the cultivators of the Sky River Court, only a few recognized what those insects were, and when they did, looks of terror appeared on their faces.

The entire sect was filled with white insects, and the droning sound they caused as they flew up. Everyone looked on in shock as the countless bugs flew up, creating a sea of insects.

If a sea of insects were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. But these bugs were clumping together, and before long, they had created the shape of a vicious, gargantuan beetle!

Upon forming, the beetle wasn't white, but rather, bright red. It was fully 3,000 meters long, and covered with countless vicious spikes that emanated the black glow of deadly poison.

After forming, the enormous beetle let out a terrifying screech that caused numerous cultivators to cough up mouthfuls of blood.

That included cultivators from the Sky River Court as well as the River-Defying Sect.

The terrifyingly ferocious nature of this beetle cast cold shock into the hearts of all present.

Even Bai Xiaochun was trembling at the sight of the beetle. Despite his recent step into Core Formation, the beetle's aura left him shaking in utter terror!

“A death beetle!!”

“One of the Sky River Court's two reserve powers! A death beetle!!” The numerous Nascent Soul cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were visibly taken aback. Frigidsect and Master Godwind exchanged a look, and each could see the serious expressions on the others' faces.

After letting out a powerful roar, the beetle lunged forward, spitting out a huge stream of green fluid that sprayed about like rainwater. Everything it touched began to dissolve, even the ground!

Instantly, miserable cries began to ring out; even the Sky River Court cultivators were being affected.

The corrosive power of the acid raid went far beyond anything Bai Xiaochun had created in his pill concocting. Terrified, he began to back up.

“What is that freakish thing!?!?”

Even as everyone was reeling in shock, the death beetle burst into motion, sending a shower of spikes out in all directions. Then, it opened its mouth, snatched up a Core Formation cultivator and swallowed him down.

Next, it landed hard on the ground, where it curled up into a ball and began to roll about, crushing everything in its path into a bloody pulp....

Not even attacks from the Nascent Soul cultivators could do anything to hinder its path. Even when some particularly powerful attacks were successful, the huge bug would simply break up into countless smaller white insects, then reform moments later.

Inside the log cabin, the boy began to clap his hands slowly. Smiling, he said, “Ah a death beetle. An excellent mid-grade spirit treasure!”

The old man didn’t respond.

“This River-Defying Sect has quite a few reserve powers at their disposal, but they’re all mortal-tier spirit treasures. Although, they do have that extraordinary Blood Ancestor of theirs. What a pity that the patriarchs issued orders not to touch it.” The boy shook his head sadly.

“I did hear that their Spirit Stream Division has a very mysterious origin. Perhaps they have a spirit treasure that can broaden our horizons?” The boy was only getting more interested by what was happening.

As he looked out at the battlefield, the death beetle was smashing back and forth, inflicting serious damage on the River-Defying Sect.

If the situation wasn't resolved, the deaths involved would be serious. The patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect all looked over at Frigidsect.

Master Godwind sounded quite anxious as he said, “Brother Frigidsect, didn't you say that you would take care of the death beetle?!”

Frigidsect hesitated for a moment. Then he looked at the huge beetle, and gritted his teeth. Without saying a word, he shot through the air toward the Spirit Stream Division's Heavenspan Battleship out on the river.

After ten breaths of time passed, the death beetle spat out another rain of acid, and sent another wave of spikes shooting out. More screams echoed out, despite how the Nascent Soul cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were doing their best to block the attacks. That was when a shocking aura suddenly rose up from the river, specifically, from the Spirit Stream Division's Heavenspan Battleship!

In response to the aura, the death beetle shivered. It wasn't the only one. All cultivators on the battlefield, from the Qi Condensation stage to Nascent Soul, were shaking uncontrollably. Their faces began to fall, and their cultivation bases began to spin out of control.

Even the boy in the log cabin was visibly shocked. Then, a look of unprecedented solemnity appeared on his face as he looked over at the Heavenspan Battleship.

“That’s....”

The old man's face fell, and a look of complete incredulity appeared on his face.

“A high-grade spirit treasure?!”

Somewhere on the battlefield was Gongsun Wan'er, who moments ago had worn a carefree expression on her face. Suddenly, she stopped in place, and a mysterious gleam rose up in her eyes as she looked over at the Heavenspan Battleship.

The entire battlefield went still. Even the Dire Skybanyan, which up to this moment had been continuously attempting to free itself from the grip of the Blood Ancestor, suddenly stopped moving.

In the Heavenspan Battleship, in a heavily guarded secret chamber, Frigidsect was kneeling down in front of a coffin. Inside of the coffin was the corpse of a baby girl, whose eyes had just

opened!

The terrifying aura that had just appeared came in the moment that she opened her eyes.

Trembling, Frigidsect raised his voice and said, “True spirit, please exterminate this death beetle!”

The instant the words left his mouth, the corpse of the baby girl vanished from within the coffin.

When she reappeared, she was in the air above the Heavenspan Battleship!

The baby girl hovered there, silently looking up into the sky, an expression of confused curiosity in her eyes, almost as if she were thinking about the past. As she floated there silently, all eyes were focused upon her.

Everyone felt their hearts and minds trembling, and were filled with the urge to drop down in worship. As for the boy in the log cabin, he was shaking visibly.

“That’s... that’s....” A look of complete and utter disbelief filled his face.

Chapter 342: Undying Heavenly King Core!

The boy wasn't the only one to react in such a way. The old man's eyes shone with strange light as he stood there panting. Outside of the Sky River Court headquarters, the three observers from the other sects all had looks of complete shock on their faces.

“Who is that!? Her aura... it's....”

“I've never felt so shaken, not even when facing a deva-level patriarch....”

“Who could ever have imagined that the River-Defying Sect would have reserve powers like this!?!?”

Even the other three divisions of the River-Defying Sect were completely and utterly shocked. Master Godwind's eyes were wide as he was yet again impressed with how well the Spirit Stream Division kept their true strength hidden. Never in all eternity could he have imagined that they would have power such as this at their disposal....

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were wide as he looked at the baby girl. Although there were other people who might know more about the girl than he did, he still was more familiar with her than most.

In fact, back when he'd laid eyes on her for the first time, he'd even heard her voice....

Now that the baby girl had emerged from the coffin, allowing Bai Xiaochun to directly sense the indescribably terrifying fluctuations rolling off of her, he couldn't help but pant.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but from the moment she opened her eyes until the instant she appeared in midair, only the briefest of moments passed.

Before anyone could even react, the baby girl looked away from the sky, taking in everyone in the world with her gaze, including the enormous beetle.

Then she simply lifted her hand and pointed at the bug!

In that instant, the death beetle began to shiver, and then seemed to lose any ability to fight back. No one could even see any ripples of a magical technique, and yet, the death beetle began to shake violently....

A moment later, the beetle was nothing more than ash dissolving in the air. The wave of the baby girl's finger had stirred natural law, and completely wiped the beetle out of existence!

The response to the scene which had just played out was complete silence....

The eyes of the River-Defying Sect cultivators were wide, and the Sky River Court cultivators' minds were reeling.

Bai Xiaochun hovered there in midair, eyes wide with shock. He had just witnessed something that no one else had noticed. With the power of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he had noticed that the wave of the baby girl's finger had caused a vibration on something that looked like a thin thread....

That slight fluctuation gave rise to transformations that he didn't understand, but the result was that the death beetle was blotted out of existence.

What had just occurred was something that could not be explained with an understanding of magical techniques and divine abilities.

As for the three people from the other sects, their scalps were tingling, and they were shaking visibly. In fact, they weren't even capable of imagining what kind of power could simply wipe away a mid-grade spirit treasure like that death beetle.

However, they could imagine what would happen if that power were turned upon them; they would be instantly turned into nothing more than ash....

Back in the Sky River Court, the young boy gasped and murmured, "An Outsider.... I can't believe the Spirit Stream Division has an [Outsider](#)...."

The look in his eyes as he observed that baby girl couldn't have been more serious.

The old man suddenly chuckled. “Outsiders are inauspicious.... Everyone in the Heavenspan Realm knows that. Furthermore, any sect that has dealings with Outsiders also becomes polluted and inauspicious....”

A gleam of anticipation could be seen deep within the old man’s eyes.

The boy maintained his silence. He was one of the five devas of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and had a very profound understanding of the world around him. He was well aware that Outsiders truly were incredibly inauspicious. However, at the same time, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s stance toward them was to stay hands off and simply ignore them.

“Damn,” thought the boy. “There must be someone very powerful in the Spirit Stream Division.... The point of revealing that Outsider wasn’t just to kill the death beetle, it was to put on a little show for me. Well, I can do the same thing!” Gaze flickering across the battlefield, he suddenly performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, then pushed his hand down onto the tree trunk next to him.

The old man’s face fell as if he wished to stop the boy, and yet, was unable to. Almost as soon as the boy pushed down onto the tree trunk, the ancient Dire Skybanyan that was the home of the Sky River Court suddenly surged with life force, and began to struggle mightily.

Powerful roaring could be heard as countless branches flew out onto the battlefield and began to wrap around the Sky River Court

cultivators, even the Nascent Soul experts. Then the branches lurched back, dragging the cultivators into the Dire Skybanyan.

As the cultivators were swallowed up, they became nutrients for the Dire Skybanyan, causing its life force to surge.

That in turn caused the enormous palm-print on the Dire Skybanyan's trunk to heal up. Countless branches spread out over it, and leaves sprouted. More intense roars could be heard, and then the enormous tree jerked, snapping the two main branches which had been pinned down by the Blood Ancestor. With that, the gigantic tree reared up to its full height.

The tree let out a bellow that shook heaven and earth, and then, its eyes opened, bright red eyes which stared at the baby girl up in the air.

The baby girl only had ten breaths of time to be awake. Although everything almost seemed to be happening in slow motion, the truth was that those ten breaths of time still hadn't passed yet, only about eight or nine.

The baby girl was already starting to wither up, and the light was fading from her eyes. And yet, she didn't even bother to glance at the roaring tree. Instead, she turned her head to look at the shocked Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun's mind instantly began to spin as a familiar yet mysterious voice spoke to him.

“I’ll give you a bit of my qi and blood. I hope... that you can concoct the River-Defying Pill sooner rather than later.”

The baby girl waved her right index finger, and a drop of blood flew out of the tip, which shot with lightning-like speed toward Bai Xiaochun’s forehead. In the blink of an eye, it had fused into him!

Having accomplished this, the baby girl vanished.

A moment later, she reappeared back inside of the Heavenspan Battleship, in the coffin, her eyes closed, once again nothing but a desiccated corpse.

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and his qi and blood began to seethe. That drop of blood which had just been absorbed into his body apparently contained boundless power. As the power spread out, Bai Xiaochun let out a long, piercing cry. At the same time, nine asuras appeared behind him. Then, with the stimulation of the blood drop, a tenth asura came into being.

As the tenth asura appeared, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes turned bright red. Throwing his head back, he let out a howl that caused heaven and earth to shake. Everyone in the River-Defying Sect was completely shocked.

His fleshly body power instantly began to rocket up, and he suddenly felt as if he were pushing against the second shackle. It seemed that just a bit more power would break through it!

“Undying Heavenly King Body!!” Blue veins bulged out on his face and neck as a shockwave blasted out from him. At the same time, the ten asuras behind him began to merge together!!

When they became one, a terrifying fleshly body power instantly exploded out of Bai Xiaochun.

Bursts of golden light shone out from the single asura as golden armor fell down upon it. Its physical appearance was changing rapidly!

No longer did it have three heads and six arms. It was now an enraged heavenly king, enormous, fully 300 meters tall. It was an [Undying Heavenly King](#)!

The appearance of the Undying Heavenly King indicated that Bai Xiaochun was finally breaking through the second shackle.

As he did, he threw his head back and roared. He suddenly felt freer. His fleshly body power was skyrocketing, and at the same time, something became visible inside of the projection of the Undying Heavenly King. It was a golden core!

It was none other than an Undying Heavenly King Core!!

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breathing, causing the Undying Heavenly King and the core within it to fly toward him. In the blink of an eye, it merged into him, causing an energy that was even more terrifying than before to explode out!

That was the power of two cores!

At the same time, the drop of blood from the baby girl instantly gave Bai Xiaochun deeper enlightenment of the River-Defying Pill. As of this moment, he had new ideas, and was slightly more confident in being able to concoct the pill!

Meanwhile, the Dire Skybanyan was still rising up into the air, and countless River-Defying Sect cultivators were fleeing from it at top speed. As for the cultivators of the Blood Stream Division, they were following the directions of Master Godwind to head back toward the Blood Ancestor.

Although everyone was shaken by what was happening with Bai Xiaochun, there was no time to ponder the situation. Master Godwind immediately roared, “Nightcrypt, my boy, take control of the Blood Ancestor! Kill that Dire Skybanyan!!”

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Just to make things clear, the term Outsider appearing here doesn't imply a connection to ISSTH. ‘Outsider’ just refers to an entity from ‘outside’ of the current realm or world. Often the term is used by human cultivators to describe non-human cultivators

There are many different version of what the “heavenly kings” look like. [Here is one depiction of the famous “four heavenly kings” of Buddhism](#)

Chapter 343: No More Sky River Court; Welcome The Honorable River-Defying Sect

It was a critical juncture. In order to test out the true spirit, the young boy gave new life to the Dire Skybanyan, which had previously been panting on the verge of death. However, the price which had been paid was enormous: the lives of all of the cultivators of the Sky River Court.

It was an unforeseen turn of events that caught the River-Defying Sect unprepared. According to any estimation, after the death beetle was destroyed, the Sky River Court should have surrendered.

After all, the death of that beetle was supposed to signify the end of the punishment.

But now everything had changed. The Dire Skybanyan roared as its enormous frame rose up over the Heavenspan River. Countless roots were connected to either side of the river bank, making it look almost like a giant.

Outside of the log cabin, the boy frowned. He didn't care at all about the deaths of the Sky River Court, nor about what the River-Defying Sect was doing. He only cared about that baby girl.

“So, she can only remain active for ten breaths of time, huh...?” The boy shook his head sadly. After a moment, a look of sadness appeared in the eyes of the old man, and even pain. He almost seemed to be hesitating over some decision.

As for all of the other cultivator clans and sects that had come to observe the fighting, they were completely shaken by what they had seen, and could hardly control their own breathing. That was especially true considering that they had seen the powerful death beetle wiped out with the single wave of a finger. Then the Dire Skybanyan suddenly surged with life force. Everyone began to back up, trembling.

Most of the River-Defying Sect cultivators had managed to flee successfully. Although a few had been wounded or killed in the process, most were now back in the Heavenspan Battleships, whose shields had been raised. As for the Blood Stream Division, most of them were on the banks of the river.

Bai Xiaochun had no time to think about the matter at the moment. He was surging with incredible power, and his skin was the color of gold. The feeling of being at the peak of the Undying Skin and Undying Flesh left him with the sensation that he could hurl mountains and drain seas.

As soon as Master Godwind called out to him, he blurred into motion. He could now move even more quickly than when he had just stepped into the Heaven-Dao Gold Core stage. Although the waters of the Heavenspan River were very dangerous to most people, they wouldn't harm Bai Xiaochun at all!

Thus, he dove into the water and shot downward toward the Blood Ancestor. It only took a few breaths of time before the Blood Ancestor's eyes opened and began to shine with golden light. Slowly but surely, the Blood Ancestor rose to his feet!!

Before, something like this wouldn't have been possible. Bai Xiaochun needed the combined strength of countless other Blood Stream Division cultivators to take control of the Blood Ancestor. But now, with effort, he was able to do it single-handedly.

As the Blood Ancestor rose up from within the waters of the Heavenspan River, the Blood Stream Division cultivators flew into the air and quickly disappeared inside. Then, the Blood Ancestor began to radiate even more incredible power than last time. Under the control of Bai Xiaochun, the blood-colored giant leaped up into the air.

It was in that moment that the Dire Skybanyan turned its gaze to the Blood Ancestor. Hatred and animosity burned inside of it as it sent countless branches and vines swirling together to form a huge hand, which then shot toward the Blood Ancestor in the form of a fist.

Instead of retreating in the face of such an attack, the Blood Ancestor continued to fly through the air, even higher than last time. In a flash, he appeared directly in front of the Dire Skybanyan, whereupon he reached out and grabbed ahold of the incoming hand, then unleashed the Mountain Shaking Bash.

Boundless golden light glittered as the Blood Ancestor bashed into the Dire Skybanyan, ripping it up by the roots and sending it flying backward several thousand meters.

Everyone who was watching could scarcely believe their own

eyes. The events which were playing out this day completely surpassed the imaginations of anyone present, to the point where they almost felt as if they were suffocating.

The Blood Ancestor and the Dire Skybanyan were both gargantuan giants, large enough to be the headquarters of a huge sect. And here they were fighting at close quarters; each blow unleashed contained the power to destroy heaven and earth. Shockwaves blasted out in all directions, sending earth and vegetation flying everywhere. Even the waters of the Heavenspan River were affected.

The giant and the tree fought back and forth relentlessly across the landscape, felling mountains and hewing massive craters into the earth.

Of course, the Dire Skybanyan hadn't truly recovered; it had only been aided by being fed the life force of the entire Sky River Court. The tree had long since been doomed to die.

Considering the intensity of the fighting, it wouldn't be long before its injuries flared out of control, and it slipped away into death!

The enormous tree let out roars of rage as it was battered backward and backward. Because of the unrelenting attacks of the Blood Ancestor, the Dire Skybanyan was unable to seize the initiative. Bai Xiaochun had already become very comfortable in his control over the gigantic body.

His Heaven-Dao Gold Core surged with energy, releasing constant power. His Undying Heavenly King Core also seethed, unleashing boundless fleshly body power.

With the increase of his cultivation base, Bai Xiaochun could also send his consciousness to greater limits. His mind now filled the Blood Ancestor, and at the same time, his fleshly body formed a resonance, giving him an unheard-of level of control. Sometimes, he even forgot that he was actually inside of the Blood Ancestor.

It was almost as if he truly were the Blood Ancestor!

“Die!” he howled. However, his voice came out of the Blood Ancestor’s mouth, rumbling like thunder. The Dire Skybanyan was shoved backward again, and yet, before it could get very far, Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed it by the arm, flinging it through the air.

The Dire Skybanyan slammed into the ground some distance away, then struggled to rise up again. Meanwhile, the log cabin inside the huge tree hadn’t been affected at all. The boy still stood outside of it, a thoughtful expression on his face. As for the old man, a look of determination had finally solidified in his eyes.

Taking a deep breath, he reached out and pushed his hand down onto the trunk of the tree. In that instant, his body withered, and a powerful aura of death completely surrounded him.

The boy looked over at him.

“Fellow Daoist,” he said coolly, “please pardon my actions from moments ago. I got caught up in the heat of the moment, and my desire to interact with an Outsider. That was unfair to you, and it also made things hard for the River-Defying Sect.

“Ah well.... If this is the choice you wish to make, so be it. With new life breathed into the skybanyan, your mark will be left behind for all time.

“It will also serve as a bit of recompense to the River-Defying Sect on my part.” With that, he waved his sleeve behind him, stepped out into the air, and vanished.

The old man didn’t say anything when the boy disappeared. He looked at the huge struggling treant, and at the same time, his body withered. Everyone in the Sky River Court was dead, and he didn’t have much longer to live either. Therefore, he was choosing to sacrifice himself to give the Dire Skybanyan a chance to live.

At the same time, some of his own will and life force would remain behind within the tree.

“Henceforth,” he murmured. “I acknowledge allegiance to the River-Defying Sect. I will protect it, just as you protected the Sky River Court!” With that, he withered up, fusing into the Dire Skybanyan.

The Dire Skybanyan shivered, and then the red glow in its eyes faded away. Even as that happened, the Blood Ancestor sailed toward it, fist held back in preparation to launch a blow. That was

when the Dire Skybanyan prostrated itself and said in a deep voice, “I acknowledge allegiance....”

Even as the words echoed out, a scintillating light flew out from inside of the huge tree. The light shrank down until it revealed a green crystal, which was the heart of the Dire Skybanyan. Whoever controlled that crystal would have the Dire Skybanyan’s life in their hands.

Under Bai Xiaochun’s control, the Blood Ancestor stopped moving right in front of the Dire Skybanyan.

Everything went silent, and all of the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect looked over at the Blood Ancestor.

It wasn’t just them. The surrounding cultivator clans and smaller sects were also waiting to see what the Blood Ancestor would do.

No one could interfere. The choice was up to Bai Xiaochun. Not even the Nascent Soul patriarchs could do anything. Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment, then smiled and reached out to grab the green crystal.

Instantly, a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering swell of cheering rose up from the three Heavenspan Battleships.

“Victory!!”

“From now on, our River-Defying Sect is a Middle Reaches sect!!”

“We won, we won!!”

Within the cheering could be heard crying, whistling, and shouts of excitement. Everyone in the River-Defying Sect was boiling with elation. Moments later, a beam of bright light became visible, shooting through the sky. As it neared, a stone stele could be seen inside.

The stone stele slammed into the ground, burying itself halfway into the earth. Visible on the top half were three characters.

River-Defying Sect!

Beneath those three characters was another smaller line of characters....

Subdivision of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

That stone stele was a sign of the approval of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and as soon as the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect saw it, their excitement grew even more intense. This was everything they had worked hard for, and at long last, they had confirmation. Many of them began to think back to all the fighting that had been involved in becoming a Middle Reaches sect, and it left them sighing.

The surrounding cultivator clans and small-scale sects all began dropping to their knees to kowtow.

“Greetings, River-Defying Sect!” More and more voices joined together, creating a cacophony of sound. As for the three representatives from the other sects, they took deep breaths as they recovered their composure. With a final look at the Blood Ancestor, they turned and left.

Everyone knew that from this day on...

The eastern Middle Reaches was no longer controlled by the Sky River Court, but rather, the honorable River-Defying Sect!

—

Chapter 344: Getting To Work

The River-Defying Sect had taken control over the Middle Reaches!

All of the cultivator clans and smaller sects were completely shaken, as were the representatives of the three other major sects.

The entire structure of the Middle Reaches would change, and it also meant that one of the four major overlords had been replaced. That was even more meaningful considering that the River-Defying Sect had come from the Lower Reaches. To the sects subservient to the other three major sects, new doors had suddenly been opened.

At the same time, the River-Defying Sect was now busier than it had ever been before. Regardless of the level of their cultivation bases, the disciples of all four divisions were mobilized to aid in the construction of a new sect headquarters.

That new River-Defying Sect headquarters was being built on the former location of the Sky River Court itself!

The patriarchs of the four divisions had long since discussed and come to an agreement regarding how it would be laid out and what it would look like. Not only did their plan fulfil the requirements of each of the four divisions, it put the sect in the perfect position to both defend and attack. After all, this new headquarters would need to stand for thousands upon thousands of years, and would be a source of glory and honor for the entire sect!

The nucleus of the headquarters was to be an enormous mountain, half of which rested beneath the surface of the Heavenspan River, and the other half of which rose high into the heavens!

Although one might think that such a mountain would impede the flow of the Heavenspan River water, various magical means would be used to ensure that the river continued to flow just as before.

The mountain would stretch high into the clouds, so tall that it was impossible to see the summit.

As for the name of the mountain, it would be called Mount River Defiance! That mountain would be the nucleus of the sect, where all the important decisions would be made. The patriarchs would live there, and the reserve powers would be held there as well.

Mount River Defiance would form the center of the sect, with four majestic mountain ranges stretching out from it in four directions. Transported into the area by powerful magics, each one would stretch out for 500 kilometers, and would feature eight peaks that, despite being impressively tall, did not rival Mount River Defiance.

Those four mountain ranges would be assigned to the four divisions of the River-Defying Sect, the Spirit, Blood, Profound, and Pill Stream Divisions!

The main gate of the River-Defying Sect would face the Heavenspan River, and would be guarded by two enormous figures. On the left there would be a towering giant that thrummed with powerful blood qi, and yet appeared to be sleeping, which would be none other than the Blood Ancestor! On the right side would be the Dire Skybanyan, standing guard over the River-Defying Sect just like the giant.

The towering tree and the enormous giant would cause all other smaller sects in the Middle Reaches to cower in fear and terror.

The planned layout of the River-Defying Sect seemed simple, but the truth was that much thought had been put into it. For example, a grand spell formation would be erected to defend the sect, a spell formation that was ten times larger than the one the Spirit Stream Sect had created years ago in the Luo Chen Mountains.

This was the type of enormous sect that deserved to occupy the Middle Reaches, a sect that was clearly so powerful that none of the other forces in the region would dare to trifle with it.

The River-Defying Sect sent emissaries back to the Lower Reaches with new regulations for the four sects which had risen up in their absence. The old customs were reinstated; in the past, the four great sects of the Lower Reaches had sent tribute upriver every year. The same arrangement would continue into the future.

The River-Defying Sect also locked down the borders of the Lower Reaches, ensuring that the new sects would have time to fully establish themselves and not face any outside invaders.

While the shocking memory of the destruction of the Sky River Court was still fresh in the minds of all, this first Dharmic decree issued by the River-Defying Sect was something that no one was willing to defy, not even the other three major Middle Reaches sects. No one wanted to incur the ill will of the River-Defying Sect.

Although the River-Defying Sect was weaker than the other three major sects, they had received approval from the presiding sect upriver. As such, the other sects couldn't very well offend them before they even had a chance to establish themselves.

Because of that, the River-Defying Sect's territory was peaceful and calm, although the population was filled with both excitement and nervousness.

The River-Defying Sect had many important affairs to attend to. Whether it was the construction of their new headquarters, the pacification of the Lower Reaches, or the task of bringing their new territory under control, there were countless tasks that required careful attention.

The first matter to take care of was to assign a mountain range to each of the four divisions. Once each division had a mountain range, they could go about setting it up according to their own styles and requirements.

Because of Bai Xiaochun, the Spirit Stream Division took the east mountain range. There were few changes to their division. The same seven mountain peaks remained that had once been on the

north and south banks of the river. The only difference was that the eighth mountain now belonged to the Core Formation cultivators.

The mountain range occupied by the Blood Stream Division was the one closest to the Blood Ancestor, which would ensure that the cultivators there were able to practice their techniques with the least interference possible. Another new rule was instituted; in order to become a blood master of one of their eight mountain peaks, a cultivator had to reach Core Formation first!

As for the Profound and Pill Stream Divisions, they had similar rules as before. The Profound Stream Division specialized in spell formations and clone cultivation, whereas the Pill Stream Division focused on the Dao of medicine. When all was said and done, the River-Defying Sect had a strong foundation in virtually all aspects; they truly met the requirements for a large sect!

The construction efforts all proceeded with great fanfare.

There was also much work to be done on what had once been the battlefield surrounding the Sky River Court. The corpses of many River-Defying sect cultivators who had died in battle needed to be cleared away.

Those cultivators were given proper burials, and their names were inscribed to be remembered for all time. They were brave heroes of the River-Defying Sect whose names would be sung in songs for generation to come.

There were many, many tasks to accomplish. Now that the fighting was done, one of the main matters at hand was to select a new sect leader. Thankfully, such matters were the responsibility of the patriarchs; Bai Xiaochun didn't have to worry about them.

Days passed, and soon Bai Xiaochun realized that everyone around him was busy in some way or another. Whenever he walked around, the disciples of the River-Defying Sect would cast reverent gazes in his direction, and offer formal greetings. At first, it felt wonderful, but soon, the thrill began to fade.

"This is so boring," he murmured. "I think I'll go chat with Xiaomei." It took a bit of searching, but he soon found her. She was with a team of fellow cultivators operating a spell formation giant to clear away rubble.

As soon as he saw her, he called out, "Xiaomei—"

"Don't bother me now, big bro Xiaochun," she called out, wiping the sweat from her brow. "I'm busy." With that, she continued on with her work.

Bai Xiaochun stood there awkwardly for a moment before catching sight of Big Fatty Zhang.

"Eldest Brother—"

Big Fatty Zhang looked over with a serious expression, then said, "Can you save it for later, Xiaochun? I have a bunch of spirit

enhancing to do....” With that, he went back to his work with Xu Meixiang and the other spirit enhancers.

Bai Xiaochun smiled, but inside he felt embarrassed and even crestfallen. Just when he was about to leave, he noticed Hou Yunfei flying in his direction.

“Big Bro Hou–”

“No time to chat, Xiaochun. Master sent me to work on the Magic Pavilion....” Hou Yunfei flew by without even stopping.

Smiling wryly, Bai Xiaochun looked around at the people bustling about, and then decided to head to the Blood Stream Division. As soon as he set foot on the mountains, he saw Song Junwan commanding a group of Middle Peak disciples as they constructed a new Middle Peak.

“Big Sis Song–”

“Go hang out somewhere else, Nightcrypt!” she barked, flicking her sleeve. Then she issued some more orders to the Middle Peak disciples.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped. Even as he was trying to decide how to respond, a quavering voice reached his ears from behind.

“Junior patriarch, do you mind just leaving? You’re making me nervous....”

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was about to go mad. Sighing, he turned and moped off.

Everyone he knew was ignoring him because of the various tasks they had been assigned. Even Bruiser had been given an assignment, and was overseeing some of the battle beasts.

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was the only idle person in the entire River-Defying Sect. The only people who qualified to give him orders were the Nascent Soul patriarchs, and they were all busy with important matters. In fact, it was even possible to occasionally catch wind of the sounds of arguing and discussion coming from Mount River Defiance.

“The elites usually do the most work, but apparently a person as incredible as me, a junior patriarch, actually ends up with nothing to do....” Completely incapable of thinking of any important tasks to attend to, he could only sigh.

“Ah whatever. I guess I should go concoct some medicine....” After finding his way to the bank of the Heavenspan River, he found a good location, sat down cross-legged, and began to think back to what he had learned from the true spirit about the River-Defying Pill.

“She gave me some good fortune, so I should definitely try to concoct that pill!” Gradually, he sank down into the calm that came with seeking enlightenment, and began to analyze the formula for the River-Defying Pill.

Time passed. Soon, night had fallen. Although the River-Defying Sect cultivators were all very busy, it was customary to rest at night, so soon, all heaven and earth grew quiet.

Most of the corpses on the battlefield had been cleared away, although a few remained here and there.

At the moment, the moon hung high in the sky, illuminating all of the lands down below. But then, a dark cloud appeared, which slowly spread out, casting darkness everywhere. Then, a white-robed figure appeared out of thin air.

—

Chapter 345: Unclean Thing....

Heaven and earth were nothing but a vast swath of darkness. As the white-robed figure appeared, a sinister coldness swept out. Because of the darkness which surrounded the figure, it was only just barely possible to identify her as a woman.

Her long hair flowed about her as she strolled across the battlefield through the darkness of night.

Wherever she went, everything around her grew so cold it seemed to hover on the verge of becoming ice. The plants and vegetation withered as though the white-robed woman was sucking away their life force. At the same time, her own life force rapidly grew stronger.

Before long, she was next to a pile of corpses belonging to former cultivators of the Sky River Court. Looking down at them, she chuckled, then sucked in a breath which caused the corpses to begin to wither up. In the briefest of moments, the corpses became nothing more than skeletons that looked like they had been dead for years.

The young woman didn't stop there. She proceeded along through the battlefield, causing numerous corpses to transform into skeletons. As this occurred, her body grew increasingly distinct. In the end, she stretched her neck a bit to loosen it, then floated over to another location where a large amount of Sky River Court cultivators' corpses lay.

This location belonged to the Blood Stream Division, and these corpses had been set aside for them to use in their corpse refining. The entire area was sealed tight with spell formations, and yet, they posed no obstacle to the young woman. She floated right through them until she was right above the corpses. Then, a strange gleam could be seen in her eyes as she yet again breathed in deeply....

Instantly, the vast quantity of corpses began to wither. In the blink of an eye, the more than 10,000 corpses turned into nothing more than bones. Some of those bones even dissolved into ashes....

By this point, the young woman's features were even clearer. After a moment passed, she burped lightly, then slowly looked up into the sky. The dark clouds began to fade away, and a shaft of moonlight fell down to reveal her face.

Shockingly, that young woman was Gongsun Wan'er!

"Well I'm not starving anymore, but what a pity that they were all dead. If only I could eat something living!" Covering her mouth, she chuckled, then turned and vanished into thin air.

With her departure, the dark clouds disappeared completely, allowing the moonlight to shine down onto a field of pale white bones....

No one detected Gongsun Wan'er that night, not even the Nascent Soul patriarchs....

Bai Xiaochun suddenly sneezed as a cold feeling swept over him. Emerging from his meditative trance, he looked around for a moment, then, after seeing nothing out of the ordinary, closed his eyes again.

The next morning at dawn, the disciples responsible for the corpses suddenly realized that the corpses were now nothing more than dried up bones. Their jaws dropped, and soon cries of alarm rose up into the air. The matter instantly caused a huge stir in the River-Defying Sect.

“What... what could have happened!?”

“Heavens, how could all the corpses here have dried up overnight...?”

“There’s not even any flesh or blood left at all. They look like they’ve been dead for ages. They definitely didn’t look like that yesterday!”

As the news spread, everyone was completely and utterly shaken. Even the patriarchs’ meeting regarding the sect rules was thrown into chaos.

Bai Xiaochun was eventually disturbed by the racket, and quickly went to see what was going on. As he hovered in the air, he heard the various discussions, and then looked over at the corpses on the battlefield.

“What happened?” he thought, shocked. The fact that all of the flesh and blood had vanished from the corpses left him with a very bad feeling.

It was in that exact moment that more than ten beams of light shot off of Mount River Defiance. It was the patriarchs of the four divisions, who had very serious expressions on their faces as they sped in the direction of the Blood Stream Division’s corpse refining district.

Behind them were a large number of Core Formation cultivators. Seeing what was happening, Bai Xiaochun quickly flew up to join them.

A large group of cultivators had already gathered in the area, and were discussing the situation. When they saw the patriarchs and the Core Formation experts, they quickly quieted down. However, curious expressions could be seen on their faces; they could tell that the events of the previous night were clearly no small matter.

Obviously, the fact that the corpses’ flesh and blood had been drained away meant that someone or something had done the deed. If that news spread, it could definitely cause problems.

The Nascent Soul patriarchs soon arrived at the corpse refining district and began to investigate. Before long, their expressions began to flicker.

That was especially true of the three most powerful of the patriarchs, the great circle Nascent Soul experts Frigidsect, Master

Godwind, and Crimson soul. They could sense a lingering aura in the area that caused their expressions to turn very grim. After exchanging glances, Master Godwind of the Blood Stream Division said, “When the Dire Skybanyan was uprooted, it created rifts for earth qi to seep through. That’s what caused this event. There’s no need for anyone to panic. I’ll set up some spell formations to keep the earth qi sealed.”

Next, Frigidsect and Crimson soul also made similar statements. Considering their reputations in the sect, such words quickly eased the hearts of most of the disciples.

However, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t too far off from the Nascent Soul cultivators, and when he looked around, he instantly sensed the cold aura in the area. There were even streams of frigid qi which entered his body and caused his life force to grow sluggish.

He didn’t quite believe the patriarchs’ explanation, but hesitated for a moment and looked over at Frigidsect. Frigidsect gave him a meaningful look that indicated he should hold his tongue.

The matter was quickly swept under the rug. All four divisions entrusted key disciples to guide the flow of conversation in the sect. This, coupled with the fact that everyone was so busy, and that no living cultivators had been affected, ensured that discussion of the matter faded away quickly. Although a few people harbored some suspicions, no one attempted to dig for more information.

However, that very night, there was a secret meeting on Mount River Defiance between the patriarchs and the Core Formation

cultivators. Bai Xiaochun was present.

Master Godwind of the Blood Stream Division looked over the gathered Core Formation cultivators, then slowly began to explain.

“The strangest thing is that none of us patriarchs detected anything unusual during last night’s odd events....

“Those corpses were completely drained of all flesh and blood, and although they didn’t contain any true life force, they would have contained other strange powers. Even more odd was that the corpses originally had a strong aura of death. However, my inspections earlier didn’t reveal even a trace of such an aura!

“The only aura remaining in the area was something extremely sinister, something akin to the power of the Nine Serenities underworld!

“I can only hope that we patriarchs’ conclusion in the matter is not mistaken.... From what we could tell, something visited the River-Defying Sect last night, something that shouldn’t even exist in the world of the living, the powerful ghost of some dead entity!

“Only the ghosts of the dead thrive on auras of death. Furthermore, after reaching a certain level of power, such ghosts require life force from living beings!”

Considering that Master Godwind was a Nascent Soul Daoist master, everyone simply listened to his words and took them to

heart.

The Core Formation cultivators were completely shocked. As for Bai Xiaochun, his face drained of blood.

“A ghost....” he thought, shivering, his hair standing on end.

It was Patriarch Crimson soul who spoke next, his voice hoarse, a strange light gleaming in his eyes. “There isn’t any need for anxiety. We’re giving you this information so that you can be on guard. The other patriarchs and I will set up an airtight spell formation! If that ghost appears again, we’ll make sure it is completely destroyed!”

As his gaze swept over the Core Formation cultivators, it lingered for a moment on Bai Xiaochun, who was currently trembling and scowling on the verge of tears.

It was with complete and utter terror that Bai Xiaochun left Mount River Defiance. His thoughts were in utter chaos, and he couldn’t stop thinking about how he had suddenly been dragged out of meditation the previous night. At that point, his skin began to crawl.

“Don’t tell me that some unclean thing was out looking for me last night!?!?” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun almost screamed. Not daring to return to the place he had been concocting pills the previous day, he decided to stay on Mount River Defiance. As far as he was concerned, staying close to the patriarchs would obviously be the safest thing to do.

Because he was the junior patriarch of the sect, he was able to lay claim to a small area of his own on Mount River Defiance, where he personally dug out a simple immortal's cave. Then he thought about the unclean thing from the previous night, and again, his skin began to crawl. Gritting his teeth, he went to find some Profound Stream Division disciples to help him set up some defensive spell formations.

Most cultivators in the sect would be content with one spell formation, but Bai Xiaochun was terrified at the moment, so he tracked down dozens of top experts from the Profound Stream Division. With their help, he set up dozens of spell formations, most of them designed to ward off evil spirits.

The experts from the Profound Stream Sect had very odd expressions on their faces when they left. And yet, Bai Xiaochun still didn't feel safe. Gritting his teeth, he spent a huge sum of merit points to purchase a vast quantity of paper talismans, most of them designed to ward off or suppress evil spirits. After plastering so many talismans onto himself that he looked like a boiled sticky-rice dumpling, he finally felt at ease.

“Hummmphh! That unclean thing won't dare to cause trouble for me now. I'm close to the patriarchs, I have tons of spell formations set up, and all kinds of talismans ready. I refuse to believe that ghost would set foot in my direction!” Breathing a sigh of relief, he strolled out of the front door of his immortal's cave.

Chapter 346: The Mysterious Power Appears Again!

A few days later, the work on the sect headquarters continued. No more incidents occurred, and everyone would have quickly forgotten about it were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun only appeared in the open blanketed with paper talismans.

Xu Baocai and some of his other friends were very curious about the situation, and Bai Xiaochun couldn't simply refuse to tell them the truth of the matter. Therefore, he used a variety of vague wording to explain that the River-Defying Sect was being haunted by a ghost.

Xu Baocai and the others were quite frightened, and soon started imitating Bai Xiaochun, plastering all sorts of paper talismans on themselves to ward off evil spirits. Of course, they didn't quite use as many as Bai Xiaochun did....

Bai Xiaochun's talismans covered virtually every inch of his body other than his face.

When he went out and about, jaws would drop, and eyes would go wide.

Whether it was Zhou Xinqi or Ghostfang, Song Que or Nine-Isles, all of them were completely taken aback. One evening when Bai Xiaochun was strutting about festooned with talismans, he happened to run into Gongsun Wan'er.

Even she was shocked by Bai Xiaochun's appearance. Jaw dropping, she blurted, "Elder Brother Xiaochun, what are you...."

"Well, if it isn't Junior Sister Gongsun." Bai Xiaochun looked her up and down, then glanced around furtively, stepped closer, and whispered, "Look, I'm gonna tell you something that you have to keep secret. The River-Defying Sect is haunted by a ghost! That's why I have all these paper talismans on, to ward off evil spirits."

Gongsun Wan'er's eyes went even wider. A moment passed, and she jokingly looked him up and down, then reached out and rubbed some of the talismans. Finally, she forced a smile onto her face, promised that she wouldn't tell anyone else, and left.

Feeling very pleased with himself, Bai Xiaochun continued on his way.

Eventually, everyone was talking about the matter of the sect being haunted. By the time the patriarchs of the four divisions realized what was happening, it was too late to quell the rumors. Bai Xiaochun's eye-catching appearance left them frustrated and shaking their heads wryly.

"He's at Gold Core, and he's still scared of ghosts...."

"Besides, that ghost is so terrifyingly powerful that those paper talismans he's wearing would be completely useless against it."

Chuckling dryly, the patriarchs decided to just ignore the matter. A few more days passed, and when Bai Xiaochun realized that no further incidents were forthcoming, he finally started to feel more at ease.

Sighing emotionally, he said, “It doesn’t matter what demons or devils or ghosts come around, with my special anti-evil clothing, they’ll all be turned into nothing but ash. Ai. Yet again, I’ve saved the sect. Nobody even knows the true extent of what I, the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect, have done to help out all my other fellow disciples!” It was currently late at the night, and he was sitting cross-legged in his immortal’s cave, meditating.

However, even as the words left his mouth, ripples spread out across the floor. They were strange ripples that seemed to be separating the area from the world outside, and they were accompanied by a frigid coldness.

The sudden development caused Bai Xiaochun’s eyes to widen, and a shrill shriek to escape his lips. He leapt to his feet, slapping his bag of holding and producing a huge stack of evil-warding paper talismans.

“Get out of here! Stay away! I’m dangerous! I’m wearing hundreds of evil-warding talismans!!” However, even as he backed up, trembling, a red beam of light shot out of his bag of holding, which was none other than the mask he had worn during his time as Nightcrypt.

The mask was vibrating, and emanating ripples, and soon, the voice of an old man began to speak from within the mask.

“You–”

“‘You’ who?!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked. Without any hesitation, he threw the entire stack of paper talismans at the mask, and then poured all of the Heaven-Dao Gold Core power he could into it. Within that stack were talismans of sealing, crushing, and warding, and once the power hit them, they virtually exploded.

Rumbling filled the air, and the mask trembled as countless paper talismans slapped down onto it. Whatever connection it had with the ground was severed, and the mask fell down. In that same moment, the fluctuations vanished, and everything went back to normal.

Beads of sweat covered Bai Xiaochun’s forehead. Even in the heat of the moment, he knew that the voice which had spoken was not the ghost he feared, but rather, the mysterious group that was behind the mask....

A moment later, the soul of imposter Nightcrypt flew out of the mask, trembling with fear. Looking at Bai Xiaochun, he cried, “They came! They really came....

“We’re finished, Bai Xiaochun, finished! You took the relic of eternal indestructibility, and now the mysterious power is after us!

“We’re dead for sure.... There’s no way they’ll show leniency to betrayers. They’ll probably skin us alive and turn us into fertilizer....”

“Shut up!” Bai Xiaochun barked, annoyed and surprised at the same time. However, he also felt somewhat guilty. After all, he really had taken away the little turtle.

“Dammit. I’m not even wearing the mask! How could they have tracked me down anyway!?” He thought about simply throwing the mask away, but couldn’t quite bring himself to get rid of something so precious. Besides, the soul of imposter Nightcrypt was still stuck inside, so if he threw it away, he would be screwing him over too.

“What... what do we do, Bai Xiaochun?” If imposter Nightcrypt weren’t a soul body, he would definitely have been leaking tears.

Bai Xiaochun looked anxiously at imposter Nightcrypt, then took a moment to think about the situation. Despite some consideration, he couldn’t come up with any solution other than to hand the mask over to the patriarchs.

“What a pity to get rid of a treasure like this that can change your appearance.” Bai Xiaochun wasn’t sure about what to do. Another half a month went by, and when nothing else happened with the mask, he finally started to calm down.

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The work on the sect headquarters was approaching its conclusion.

The patriarchs were also reaching the end of their discussions about how to handle the situation in the Lower Reaches, as well as the territory currently under the control of the River-Defying Sect.

Most importantly, they were finalizing all the official sect rules.

According to the new arrangement, one of the four divisions would be formally in charge of the sect for a two-hundred-year period. After those two hundred years, the sect affairs would pass to the next division. The same arrangement would determine who the sect leader was. The first division to wield leadership power in the sect was the Spirit Stream Division. No longer was Zheng Yuandong to be the leader of the Spirit Stream Division, he was to be the sect leader of the entire River-Defying Sect!

Although his cultivation base was a bit lacking, he was more than qualified to handle the responsibilities!

In fact, with the agreement and help of the patriarchs, Zheng Yuandong decided to sacrifice his potential for future growth to make an immediate breakthrough into Core Formation. Furthermore, he made arrangements for Li Qinghou to succeed him as the second sect leader, one hundred years later.

At the end of the Spirit Stream Division's two hundred years of leadership, the Blood Stream Division would take over. After that would come the Profound Stream Division, and then finally the Pill Stream Division.

None of the patriarchs were opposed to the arrangement!

Soon, the sect headquarters was completed. The Blood Ancestor and the Dire Skybanyan stood tall, and the four mountain ranges spread out in all directions. The last step was to activate the grand spell formation, and then everything would be finished!

The cheering was deafening. A month before, the three Heavenspan Battleships had been sent downriver to the Lower Reaches, and had returned with the disciples who had been unable to fight in the war for various reasons.

With all the disciples present, the River-Defying Sect now had well over 1,000,000 members. It was quite a bustling place.

A grand ceremony was held to commemorate the occasion, and numerous invitations were sent out into the Middle Reaches to the other three great sects, as well as certain ancient cultivator clans.

The formalities lasted for seven days. The Starry River Court, Dao River Court and Polarity River Court all sent people to offer formal congratulations. Not a single one of the cultivator clans failed to send representatives.

As for the four major sects who had risen up in the Lower Reaches, they also sent representatives with congratulations and gifts. During that seven-day period, the River-Defying Sect was the talk of the entire Middle Reaches.

As the junior patriarch of the sect, Bai Xiaochun obviously had a very high standing, and was the subject of much attention. He made public appearances every day, wearing ceremonial clothing and showing off his veins of steel. He could not have glittered with any greater glory than he did. Bai Xiaochun quickly fell in love with his role. However, the patriarchs, as well as Li Qinghou, only got more nervous, fearing that he would reveal his true nature in front of all the crowds.

However, no one noticed any such clues. He chatted with people wittily, and was definitely the center of attention. Whenever he intentionally unleashed his murderous aura, everyone in the area was shocked.

The patriarchs were very pleased with his performance, and Bai Xiaochun was quite proud of himself. To him, it was actually a very simple matter to put on such an act. Seven days later, the ceremonies ended, the visitors left, and the sect quieted down.

At the moment, the biggest problem facing the River-Defying Sect was...

They had no Deva Realm cultivator!

The other three great sects in the Middle Reaches all had a Deva Realm patriarch to oversee the sect. That was the only way to truly be a great sect, and it was a fatal weakness for the River-Defying Sect!

Chapter 347: When The Talking Rabbit Stops Repeating....

It was only now that Bai Xiaochun was learning about how the higher levels of the cultivation system in the Heavenspan Realm worked. After Qi Condensation, Foundation Establishment, Core Formation, and Nascent Soul came the Deva Realm!

The Deva Realm was completely terrifying. It was like a complete fusion with heaven and earth, in which the cultivator didn't unleash his own power, but rather, the power of all creation around him. He drew upon the energy of heaven and earth to emit crushing pressure and utilize divine abilities that went beyond the imaginations of even Nascent Soul cultivators.

For many years, there had only ever been four Deva Realm cultivators in the eastern Middle Reaches of the Heavenspan River. However, one of them, the deva from the Sky River Court, had been killed, leaving only three behind.

Deva Realm experts were powerful enough to be able to destroy entire sects, which meant that if one of them attacked the River-Defying Sect, it would most certainly be destroyed.

Even with Bai Xiaochun controlling the Blood Ancestor, and the assistance of the Dire Skybanyan, they would still be defeated. Only by calling upon the assistance of the true spirit would they be able to survive, and unfortunately, they had already used their one and only River-Defying Pill.

Although the River-Defying Sect currently seemed very powerful, they were lacking the highest level of power they needed. One of the driving forces in the patriarchs' ability to reach a decision regarding the sect rules, and in fact, one of the reasons they had all agreed to fight together into the Middle Reaches to begin with, was that the spiritual energy and resources there were such that reaching the Deva Realm was a distinct possibility.

At the moment, the three people most likely of being able to reach the Deva Realm were Master Godwind, Frigidsect, and Crimson soul!

After the ceremonies were over, Master Godwind and Crimson soul chose to go into secluded meditation. The other patriarchs did the same. Each and every Nascent Soul cultivator hoped to eventually reach the point of becoming a deva!

In all of the eastern Heavenspan River, there were no more than ten devas total, and that included the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! From that, it was easy to see not only how powerful they were, but also how rare.

In a grand hall on Mount River Defiance, the founding patriarch of the Spirit Stream Division, Frigidsect, had called Bai Xiaochun to explain to him certain matters regarding the sect and devas. "Although you can't quite say that in the Deva Realm it's possible to live as long as heaven and earth, with the energy at your disposal, you can remain unwithered for almost all eternity. Your battle prowess would be such that you could dominate the entire cultivation world!

“Therefore, I will be going into secluded meditation to strive for my chance to break through into the Deva Realm!”

This was actually Bai Xiaochun’s first time hearing about the Deva Realm, and he already wished he could reach it.

“What’s after the Deva Realm?” he asked.

Frigidsect remained silent for a moment, but his eyes were already shining brightly. “After that is the Demigod Realm!”

Unexpectedly, the moment he said the word ‘demigod’, a peal of thunder rang out in the sky above!

The sudden crack of thunder startled Bai Xiaochun.

“Even saying the name can cause fluctuations to appear in heaven and earth. The Demigod Realm defies description. Perhaps people like that really are just as the name describes, part god!” The truth was that not even Frigidsect knew much about the Demigod Realm.

“In all of the eastern cultivation world, there is only one demigod, and he is the living reserve power of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. That patriarch is the only reason why the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect became a riversource sect!”

This was Bai Xiaochun’s first time hearing such things, and his eyes were as wide as saucers. Without even thinking about it, he

asked, “What’s after Demigod?”

“I don’t know!” Frigidsect replied, shaking his head. Having finished his explanation of cultivation, he extended his right hand, and three glowing motes of light appeared.

Within those motes of light could be seen a scroll painting, a reptilian scale, and a dagger!

The scroll painting possessed the air of something that had existed for many years, and pulsed with an ancient aura. As for the scale, Bai Xiaochun’s first impression was that it was beginning to rot; he couldn’t even tell what kind of creature it came from.

And then there was the dagger, which actually looked less like a dagger and more like a black horn!

“The Landscape of Nine Provinces is an earth-tier precious treasure, capable of storing a vast quantity of items. Anything that gets sucked in can be refined, and then sealed with an enslaving branding mark. It can provide an incredible boost to speed, and is even capable of short-range teleportation!

“The Ancient Devil Scale is also an earth-tier precious treasure. Not even a Nascent Soul expert could break through it. Unfortunately, I only have this one scale. With more, a full suit of armor could be forged, which would make it even more difficult for Nascent Soul cultivators to deal with you!

“Last is this dagger, which is also an earth-tier precious treasure. It can summon a rebel dragon of incredible power!”

“You’re giving all of these to me?” Bai Xiaochun said, his heart starting to pound as he eyed the motes of light. Any one of the objects in front of him would be enough to arouse his excitement, let alone all of them. He swallowed hard.

“As the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect, you will represent the sect when you go out into the world. It’s only natural that these three precious treasures should go to you. Take some time to get used to them. In the future, it will be up to you to make a name for the River-Defying Sect!” Frigidsect smiled. Bai Xiaochun was incredibly important to the River-Defying Sect, and the patriarchs had all agreed that since they were going into secluded meditation, Bai Xiaochun should be given three precious treasures to use for his own protection.

Bai Xiaochun was visibly excited, and quickly offered profuse thanks. Then he took the three precious treasures and began to fondle them lovingly. Frigidsect cleared his throat.

“I’m going to enter into secluded meditation now. In a moment, someone from the Senior generation will come to pay you a visit, so please wait for him. Finally, take this jade slip. It’s an arcane cultivation technique for you now that you’ve reached Core Formation, a secret magic of the former Frigid School!” A strange expression could be seen on Frigidsect’s face, but before Bai Xiaochun could look up to notice, Frigidsect tossed him a jade slip, turned, and vanished.

“Someone from the Senior generation?” Bai Xiaochun asked, catching the jade slip. “But who?” However, Frigidsect was gone. As the moments ticked by, though, Bai Xiaochun’s anticipation grew.

“Maybe they’re going to give me some more rewards....” he thought, getting more excited. As time went on, he was coming to find that, as the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect, he was treated very well. Someone from the Senior generation was even coming to give him a gift! Taking a deep breath, he rose to his feet and stood there straight and tall, trying to look as somber as possible.

Inside, he was already feeling pleased with himself; he knew that this pose was one that the older generation would definitely be pleased with.

After waiting for a bit, Bai Xiaochun was starting to lose patience. But then, he suddenly got a very strange feeling, as if someone were watching him. Without even thinking about it, he turned around, and when he saw what was right there in front of him, his eyes went wide.

At some indeterminable point, a rabbit had appeared right behind him!

The rabbit didn’t walk around on all fours like a normal rabbit. It stood on its hind legs. It had its hands clasped behind its back much like a person would do, and it was staring at Bai Xiaochun with its red eyes. Its ears stuck straight up above its head, and although it looked somewhat comical, there was something

ancient in its eyes that made the rabbit seem completely beyond the ordinary.

“You....” Bai Xiaochun said. Gasping, he backed up. Then he clasped his hands over his mouth. Perhaps other people might not recognize this rabbit, but Bai Xiaochun did. He would probably recognize it even if it were transformed into a pile of ash. This was none other than that damnable talking rabbit!

The truth was that way back in the fight outside the Profound Stream Sect’s city, when he saw the rabbit and the monkey together, he’d begun to suspect that something strange was going on. Now that the rabbit had appeared again, he began to pant. However, he quickly plastered a smile onto his face, and then cautiously clasped his hands in greeting.

“Um... disciple offers greetings, Senior!”

The rabbit snorted coldly as it looked Bai Xiaochun up and down. For some reason, the rabbit wasn’t repeating his words like it usually did, and although that should have made Bai Xiaochun happy, he was only left with a dark premonition.

Getting more nervous, he backed up a few paces and said, “Senior, I—”

“You looked quite pleased with yourself when you tried to chase me down last time,” the rabbit said, his voice cracking with ancientness. “However, I won’t lower myself to your level.”

Bai Xiaochun immediately started to get more nervous.

“I’ve come here today to perform a little test. Let’s see if those precious treasures of yours will really work.” As he glared at Bai Xiaochun, his mouth widened into a smile, a smile that filled Bai Xiaochun’s heart with terror. Letting out a shriek, he didn’t hesitate at all to turn and flee.

However, in the moment he started to move, the rabbit blurred into motion, raising his right foot and kicking Bai Xiaochun hard on the back.

A rumbling sound echoed out, mixing with Bai Xiaochun’s scream as he flew through the air. However, even as he flew, he righted himself and then shot forward with greater speed.

“Help! He’s trying to kill me!! A killer rabbit!! Patriarchs, save me! Save me!!” Bai Xiaochun sped along frantically, his shrieks echoing out in all directions. Many disciples heard, and immediately looked up to see what was happening.

What they saw was a rabbit flying through the air, slamming into Bai Xiaochun and sending him spinning. Then the rabbit began to cackle with laughter.

“Scream! The louder the better! Remember how you tried to blow me up during our last chase? Dammit! I went to hide in 10,000 Snakes Valley, and yet you suddenly showed up looking for me!!

“I even went all the way to the Blood Stream Sect to hide from you. Y-y-you... you little bastard! I can’t believe you tracked me down to the Blood Stream Sect!!” The rabbit’s eyes were bright red as it chased after Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s screams echoed out into the sky. Soon, certain cultivators from the Blood and Spirit Stream Divisions recognized the rabbit, and began to cry out in alarm.

“That’s....”

“Heavens, that’s the talking rabbit!!”

“What’s that rabbit doing here? And why isn’t it repeating things!?”

—

Chapter 348: The Rabbit's Weakness....

Bai Xiaochun felt more than ever that he was being unjustly accused. He instantly drew upon the full power of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, and even his Undying Heavenly King Body. Although that pushed him forward with incredible speed, it didn't make him faster than the rabbit. Furthermore, the rabbit was a very crafty character, and knew just where to kick him for it to hurt the most.

Scowling on the verge of tears, he considered calling upon the three precious treasures he had just been given. But before he could, the rabbit shot forward with blinding speed, causing a series of sonic booms to echo out as he kicked Bai Xiaochun over and over again.

Most outrageous of all was that the rabbit actually chose to kick him in the face....

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was going to go crazy. The rabbit was obviously refusing to give him a chance to use the precious treasures, all in its attempt to bully its way to revenge.

“You can't blame me for everything! You're the one who loves to repeat everything! Y-y-you're... you're a total bully!!”

Behind him, the rabbit roared, “You think I want to repeat what everybody says? Dammit! Nobody asked you to bring up that topic! This... this is all your fault!” The rabbit unleashed more kicks at Bai Xiaochun.

“All your fault! Especially the last time! I can’t believe you only said half a sentence! Do you know that you almost drove me literally insane!?!?”

“Listen to me, you little punk, the next time I’m repeating what people say, you had better finish your sentences!!” The angrier the rabbit got, the harder and more viciously it kicked Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was sore all over, and was being driven to the point of rage.

“He’s trying to kill me!” he howled. “He’s trying to kill me!!

“Somebody save me! I’m the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect! I’ve spilled my own blood for the River-Defying Sect!

“Save me, patriarchs!!” However, no matter how loudly he shouted, the Nascent Soul Daoist masters didn’t respond at all. Bai Xiaochun felt completely maligned.

“You’re pushing things too far, rabbit!!

“So what if I only said half a sentence? If I had said any more, and you repeated it, I would have lost my poor little life!

“I said half a sentence back then, and I’ll say half a sentence next time too!

“In fact, I’ll do it now.... What comes after I, Bai Xiaochun? Tell me! Hurry up, spit it out! What comes after I, Bai Xiaochun?!?!”

As the words left his mouth, a tremor suddenly ran through the rabbit. A blank look appeared in his eyes, and he suddenly lurched to a halt in midair.

“I, Bai Xiaochun....”

In response, Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, and it was the same with the other disciples who had come to see what was going on. Everyone was looking at the rabbit, which now looked completely different from before.

Instead of keeping his hands clasped behind his back, he dropped down on all fours, like a normal rabbit. Ears sticking straight up, he began to repeat the same words over and over again.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was already pounding, but instead of continuing to flee, he cried, “Come on, tell me! What words come after I, Bai Xiaochun?!”

Equally nervous, the rabbit howled, “I, Bai Xiaochun....”

“Come on, tell me! Spit it out!” Looking excited, Bai Xiaochun took a few steps forward toward the rabbit. Now that he had found what appeared to be the rabbit’s weakness, he was eager to take advantage of it.

“I, Bai Xiaochun....” The rabbit’s eyes were so red that they looked like they might start bleeding. His fur was standing on end, and the pressure being put on him from Bai Xiaochun made him tremble on the verge of collapse. With that, he let out a bellow like a crack of thunder, then turned and began to flee for his life. At the same time, it began to cry out all sorts of gossip, a large amount of it having to do with Patriarch Crimson soul. Incensed, Crimson soul himself appeared and tried to chase down the rabbit, but it soon disappeared.

At long last, Bai Xiaochun realized that the rabbit clearly wasn’t stable mentally. Sometimes it was clear-headed, other times not. Only when it was clear-headed did it act like an old bastard. The most important thing was that their last encounter had left a deep impression on him; the matter of saying only half a sentence could drive the rabbit nearly to collapse....

“So that’s how it is! Hahaha! Trifling little rabbit. How dare you try to tangle with Bai Xiaochun! Let’s see if you ever dare to mess with me again in the future!” He breathed a sigh of relief, and was just about to continue to boast when suddenly he realized that Patriarch Crimson soul had given up on chasing the rabbit, and was currently glaring at him.

Then he thought back to some of the things the rabbit had said, and quickly ducked his head and hurried back to his immortal’s cave.

“It wasn’t my fault,” he muttered. “Nobody did anything to help me! Everyone just watched the poor junior patriarch getting beaten up by that rabbit!” Rubbing his face discontentedly, he

decided that it would be best not to go out very often. After all, if he ended up chasing the rabbit again, who knew what the thing might say.

“Hey, what about Bruiser? Where did he get off to? I haven’t seen him for days now. I bet he’s off messing around with some female beast!” Because of the special connection between the two of them, he could tell that Bruiser was safe, though, so he didn’t give it much more thought.

“Ah whatever. I never took the time to rest and recover after reaching Heaven-Dao Gold Core. I might as well take advantage of the time now to go into secluded meditation.” With that, he made his decision. He immediately sealed his immortal’s cave up tight and began to focus on cultivation.

Time passed. A month later, he opened his eyes, and found that his cultivation base was much more stable than before, and had even made a bit of progress. With that, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a jade slip.

It was pitch-black, and didn’t seem very impressive. However, as soon as he put his hand on it, a sensation of intense coldness filled him. This was none other than the technique that Frigidsect had given him....

After scanning the jade slip with divine sense, Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered with surprise.

“Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation!

“The cultivation of this technique requires Heavenspan River water. However, instead of consuming it, you alter its structure into two types: Frigid and Will....

“Use the technique to form the Frigid, use the Frigid to evolve the Will....

“If one masters it, one’s Will can freeze everything in the area with frigid coldness. Hmm... what’s the Will it talks about?” As he continued to study the jade slip, his surprise grew. Eventually, he put the slip down.

“So, Will is the ultimate level of control power, something completely and utterly bizarre. Essentially, it comes by fusing control power with one’s own thoughts!

“The Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art develops control power, and the Violet Qi Heavenspan Incantation uses that control power to create the Heavenspan Dharma Eye. That’s only the initial step toward fusing control power with one’s thoughts. The Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation involves a complete fusion of one’s thoughts with control power. Then, true Willpower can be developed and grown....”

Bai Xiaochun took a long, deep breath, and slowly picked up the jade slip again. Finally, he understood the truth; the Spirit Stream Sect techniques were all steps in a ladder leading to the ultimate form of power: Will!

“In that case, I can definitely succeed with my Human Controlling Grand Magic!

“In fact, by using Will, I can also complete my work with the powers of gravity and repulsion!

“Will....” he murmured. Looking over at a rock in the corner of the Immortal’s cave, he tried to use nothing but his own thoughts to get it to fly up into the air.

Almost immediately, the little rock trembled in place. Although it didn’t fly up, Bai Xiaochun was already delighted. He had just moved that rock without any magic, without any cultivation base power, without any divine abilities. He had used only his own thoughts.

After a bit of time passed, he suppressed his excitement and began to think about going to get a huge bucket of Heavenspan River water to start cultivating. All of a sudden, he thought about his Undying Live Forever Technique. Closing his eyes, he began to review the information he had received from the legacy of the Blood Ancestor, the third volume of...

Undying Muscles!

Muscles were the source of speed, and the power of muscles could make a person strong and tough. When you combined such levels of speed and power into a fist strike, the shocking results would surpass anything that had come before it!

Even more fantastic was that the ultimate combination of speed and power in the Undying Muscles technique led to an incredible divine ability, a hexing magic that could be unleashed with every punch or kick!

It was a hexing magic that could seal anything and everything!

The first two volumes of the Undying Technique provided miraculous divine abilities in addition to the ultimately powerful fleshly body improvements, and this one was no different.

“The Undying Hex!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with bright light. That was the divine ability that came with the third volume, something similar to the Throat Crushing Grasp and the Mountain Shaking Bash!

Unlike the other two volumes, the Undying Muscles were not divided into different levels. Instead, the goal was to apply the technique to every part of the body!

It was divided up into the four limbs, the torso, and the head!

The only way to master the technique was to apply it to each and every one of those body parts!

—

Chapter 349: A Love Letter....

After delving into the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation and the Undying Muscles, Bai Xiaochun was filled with anticipation regarding what was to come in the future. That was especially true after sensing his own flourishing life force. Although he wasn't completely sure of the limits of his longevity, he had the feeling that it was at least a thousand years or so.

Many people found cultivation to be dull and boring, but he didn't mind it at all, and quickly immersed himself in the Frigid School Will Evolving Incantation and the Undying Muscles.

After some consideration, he decided that he would begin cultivating the Undying Muscles with the big toe on his left foot.

"I'll go one toe at a time," he thought. "That will be the most stable way to go about it!" He was fully convinced that this was the right course. He could already imagine the screams of pain from his enemies when they were completely caught off guard by the power of his toe.

"Only an idiot would start with the fingers. What good are fingers? Everyone is prepared for someone to attack with the hands. Besides, in a critical moment, how could your fingers help you to escape? But toes are different. Not only can they catch people off guard in a sudden attack, they can also be used to run away at full speed. As long as I have my poor little life, I have everything!" Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that he was the epitome of wisdom, intelligence and courage. He was so pleased that he started looking

around for a copper mirror to admire himself in, only to discover that there were no mirrors in his immortal's cave.

“That won't do!” he thought. “I can't believe there's not a single mirror in here!” He was feeling more than a little disappointed. However, it was at that point that he thought back to the young woman from the Sky River Court whom he had killed in battle. When he'd scanned her bag of holding, he remembered seeing a mirror.

He quickly opened his bag of holding and began rifling through its contents until he found a round, palm-sized copper mirror. He also looked for the little turtle, but didn't find even a trace of him. However, he was used to the turtle's mysterious vanishing acts, and thus wasn't very surprised.

After examining the mirror for a bit, Bai Xiaochun was delighted to discover that it wasn't just an ordinary mirror, it was actually a useful magical item. Although it wasn't as extraordinary as his three precious treasures, it was still quite impressive: it could form a magical clone.

However, it wasn't the type of clone that could be used for fighting, and was more for distracting the enemy. Back when he had been fighting the young woman, he had completely dominated the fight. Plus, his use of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye had made the use of such a clone useless.

“Not bad at all, actually,” he said as he fiddled with the mirror. A moment later, he decided to study the mirror with his third eye. As soon as it opened, he said, “Eee?”

Violet light flickered within the immortal's cave, then disappeared a moment later when he closed his third eye.

“It seems that young woman didn't even know the true function of this mirror. Not only can it form magical clones, it can also keep souls alive!” Another surprise was that the fluctuations of this mirror were very similar to the fluctuations of the mysterious mask. Although they weren't exactly the same, they were very close.

After playing with it for a bit longer, he finally put it off to the side and resumed his cultivation. Time passed. Before long, half a month had gone by.

One night when he was in the middle of a session of cultivation, all of the hair on his body suddenly stood on end. Opening his eyes, he noticed that the floor was rippling wildly, and a cold air was building up in the immortal's cave, as if it were being separated from the wider world around him.

At the same time, a red beam of light flew out from his bag of holding, and the mask appeared. Then, an ancient voice spoke, seemingly trembling with anxiety.

“Don't–”

Bai Xiaochun gasped. Before the voice could say more than a single word, he produced a stack of paper talismans even larger than before, poured his Heaven-Dao Gold Core cultivation base

power into them, and then threw them at the mask.

Smacking sounds rang out again, along with a roar of rage from within the mask. Then the mask clattered to the floor, and the ripples vanished.

Only then did imposter Nightcrypt's soul float out, trembling.

"Finished!" he screamed. "We're finished! They came again! What do we do? What are we supposed to do...?"

Bai Xiaochun was also terrified, and was convinced that if he'd acted any slower, he would have been placed in extreme danger.

"Damned evil spirit!!" Bai Xiaochun said, grinding his teeth. Then he looked over thoughtfully at imposter Nightcrypt's soul. After a moment, a gleam of determination appeared in his eyes.

"Imposter Nightcrypt, I'm going to give you a new home, and you need to cooperate. Otherwise I'll have to throw you into the Heavenspan River along with the mask to feed the fishes!"

Imposter Nightcrypt began trembling again, and it seemed like he wanted to say something. However, considering how bloodshot Bai Xiaochun's eyes were, he didn't even dare to open his mouth. He simply nodded, eyes shining with terror.

"I can mop the floor with that old rabbit," Bai Xiaochun said with a growl, "so I refuse to believe that I can't handle this wimpy little

mask!” Snorting coldly, he pulled the mirror out and studied it a bit further. Then he performed an incantation gesture with both hands and pointed at the mask. Imposter Nightcrypt immediately began screaming, but then Bai Xiaochun glared at him and he quickly shut his mouth.

Bai Xiaochun slipped into complete focus as he unleashed his Heaven-Dao aura. His Gold Core seethed as his cultivation base erupted with power. As a result, his right hand turned completely golden. At the same time, his Heavenspan Dharma Eye opened, shining with intense violet light.

A terrifying shockwave blasted out from Bai Xiaochun. The violet light shining from his Heavenspan Dharma Eye was now tinged with gold as a stream of Heaven-Dao aura raced through it to land onto the mask. Almost instantly, Bai Xiaochun was able to see the areas where imposter Nightcrypt’s soul was connected to the mask itself.

As soon as he saw the connections, he didn’t hesitate for even a moment to chop his hand through the air, causing golden light to flicker brightly.

“Sever!” he growled. Rumbling sounds echoed out as his hand chopped into the connections. The connections trembled; although they were tough, they were now being assaulted by a Heaven-Dao aura, and could only hold firm for a short moment. Then they melted away!

Imposter Nightcrypt immediately let out a bloodcurdling scream as his soul shot out of the mask. Unexpectedly, as soon as he

appeared in the open, some powerful force seemed to grab ahold of him as if to drag him away.

Imposter Nightcrypt screamed in terror, and Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped. Thankfully, he already had the mirror ready to go. He quickly waved his sleeve, sending the mirror flying toward imposter Nightcrypt. In the blink of an eye, imposter Nightcrypt was sucked inside.

After everything was over, Bai Xiaochun was left gasping for breath. Although the events which had just occurred had seemed simple enough, they had actually been incredibly draining. A quick check confirmed that imposter Nightcrypt was now in the mirror. His soul seemed to have been weakened significantly, and he was unconscious, but not seriously injured. Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief.

Then, he turned his gaze to the mask. Snorting coldly, he pulled out more paper talismans, which he slapped onto the surface of the mask. In the end, even he wasn't sure how many restrictive spells were sealing the mask, but there were layers upon layers of them. Finally, Bai Xiaochun felt a bit more at ease.

"Let's see if you manage to misbehave again now that you're in that state!" Feeling very pleased with himself, he put the mask away, and then continued with his cultivation.

Another half a month went by, during which time the mask didn't act up again. Bai Xiaochun was starting to get a bit distracted, and even found himself pondering the issue of the River-Defying Pill.

Half a month later, he couldn't sit still any longer.

"I'm already in the Gold Core stage," he thought, "which is already pretty awesome. I need to strike a good balance between hard work and leisure. I can't just sit around cultivating all the time." The more he reasoned on the subject, the more it made sense to leave secluded meditation. With that, he opened his immortal's cave and stepped out into the open....

After taking in a deep breath of fresh air, he looked around at the River-Defying Sect, and deep in his heart, a sense of intense pride rose up. Clasp his hands behind his back, he began to stroll through the sect, appreciating the sights as he went.

"It's been a long time since I saw Big Sis Song," he thought. "Man, I miss her...." Whenever he thought about Song Junwan's scorchingly sexy appearance, his heart surged with warm feelings. After blinking a few times, he decided that he should go find her and say some loving things.

As he walked along, the leaves in the trees rustled, and the birds sang. The spiritual energy in the River-Defying Sect was abundant, and the entire place seemed like a celestial paradise. He encountered many River-Defying Sect disciples, including young men and young women, all of whom gazed at him with looks of awe and reverence. Because of his status as junior patriarch, he had one of the highest positions in the entire sect.

Such looks of awe were especially noticeable on the faces of the

disciples from the Profound and Pill Stream Divisions, who didn't actually know very much about him. After all, his pure and fair appearance was quite pleasing to the eye. Plus, he enjoyed putting on a good show in public. The truth was that there were quite a few young female disciples who had taken a liking to him.

At the moment, he was passing through the Profound Stream Division, and ran into some disciples who were offering him greetings. Suddenly, a female disciple flew out from one of the mountains. She was quite a beauty, but was blushing furiously as she hurried over to Bai Xiaochun. To his shock, she bit her bottom lip and averted her gaze as she quickly handed him an envelope. Before he could say anything to her, she turned and hurried away.

Cultivators usually used jade slips to communicate with each other, making handwritten letters somewhat of a rarity. Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock for a moment, and then looked down at the envelope to discover that a heart was drawn on its surface....

“Is this...?” His eyes went wide, and he gasped. Then he began to shiver in excitement.

“A love letter!!!”

—

Chapter 350: You're Lying!

All of the disciples in the area had stopped walking, and were now looking at Bai Xiaochun.

The envelope he was holding in his hand was most certainly a love letter!

Of course, Bai Xiaochun didn't have much experience getting love letters. As for the surrounding disciples, from the looks in their eyes, they all seemed to be wishing him well over the matter, and some of the male disciples even seemed a bit jealous.

Bai Xiaochun's hands were trembling as he held the envelope, and his heart surged with emotions. Then, his eyes widened, filling with excitement.

"This is the first time in my entire life that I've been given a love letter! The only letters I got in the past were fighting notices!" He was so moved that tears began to seep out of the corners of his eyes. Taking a deep breath, he looked up at the young woman who'd given him the letter, who was fleeing as quickly as a frightened bunny.

"Although I don't even know your name," he murmured, "I will definitely cherish this love letter, the first one that has ever been given to me in my entire life. Years from now, I'll show it to my descendants so they can appreciate how charming their patriarch was in his youth!" Even as he sighed deeply in his heart, he realized that all of the surrounding River-Defying Sect disciples were

looking at him, and he felt even more wonderful than before.

“I love the River-Defying Sect,” he thought, “and I love all of my fellow disciples....” It was with some difficulty that he collected himself and then oh-so-carefully placed the love letter into his bag of holding. With that, he stuck his chin up, flicked his sleeve, and prepared to make a little speech. But then...

Another female disciple of the Profound Stream Division bit her lip as she made a big decision. Without any more hesitation, she hurried over to Bai Xiaochun, head lowered and cheeks flushed as she pressed an envelope into his hand and then rushed off.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped at the sight of this second love letter resting there in his hands. Instead of a heart drawn onto the surface of the envelope, it showed two little clasped hands.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t the only shocked one. The other disciples who’d begun to gather to see what was happening all began to cry out in shock.

“There’s nothing strange about the junior patriarch getting a love letter. But I can’t believe he actually got two of them!”

“Agggghhhh! Everybody knows that I, Xu Xiaoshan, am one of the most handsome guys in the sect! How come nobody’s ever given me a love letter!?”

Even as the discussions broke out, Bai Xiaochun’s hands began to

shake, and then he threw his head back and let loose a long cry of joy. His eyes were sparkling, and he was trembling visibly. At the same time, he was deeply and profoundly moved, down to the core of his being.

“This is only the second love letter I’ve ever received in my entire life! I never could have imagined that I would actually receive two love letters!” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t be more excited, and he was virtually panting as he looked at the retreating form of the young woman who’d just given him the letter. After carefully putting the love letter away, his eyes began to gleam with unprecedented determination.

“I shouldn’t be so selfish as to just worry about my own affairs. Ever since I became the junior patriarch, I’ve become the complete center of attention. All of the disciples are watching me, and that includes the female disciples!” Brimming with righteousness, and eyes glittering, he decided that now wasn’t the best time to go visit Song Junwan. Instead, he began to stroll through the mountains of the Profound Stream Division.

Before he’d gone very far, a third female disciple hurried over to him and shyly handed him an envelope.

Then there was a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth....

Over the course of the following hours, Bai Xiaochun continue to feel more and more moved. He had received dozens of love letters, all of them hand-written. He was now filled with deep and profound emotions.

In response, the disciples who had begun to follow him devolved into pandemonium.

“Heavens, another one!”

“How could this be happening? He’s gotten so many love letters. Th-th-this....”

“Are those girls all blind or something? He might be the junior patriarch, but I’m a Chosen too!!”

Bai Xiaochun was already in a bit of a daze. The first few love letters had left him moved, but now he had dozens of them, and almost couldn’t believe it. The sight of so many blushing female disciples caused waves of emotion to batter his heart.

“Am I... am I really so outstanding?” he thought giddily.

Eventually, he left the Profound Stream Division’s mountains and headed into the Pill Stream Division. Unexpectedly, the first thing that happened was that a female disciple ran over bashfully and handed him a love letter.

In fact, one of the particularly creative female disciples had concocted a medicinal pill which she had carved with countless lines of text....

It was evening before he returned to Mount River Defiance. Never could he have been prepared for the events of the day, and they left him feeling more blessed than ever.

“I guess I really am just too outstanding. Hahaha! I guess that’s what happens when you’re dashing like me. Well, like I’ve always said, only dashing people can get special treatment like this.” Bai Xiaochun’s giggling laughter filled his immortal’s cave as he sat down cross-legged, pulled out all of the love letters he’d received, and spread them out in front of him. It was almost as if a whole group of attractive female disciples were all standing there, bashfully expressing their love to him....

After studying the drawings on the envelopes, he began to open and read each letter.

Bai Xiaochun was left trembling, and his face was even a bit flushed. That night, his heart burst with emotion over and over again. By the time he finished reading all of the letters, the light of dawn was rising up over the horizon.

After the sun was up, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet, straightened up his garments, and then hurried out of his immortal’s cave, a broad smile covering his face. However, even as he stepped into the open, he stopped, then went back inside to change into his official junior patriarch’s robe.

It was a very ornate Daoist robe, ocean-blue and seemingly filled with rippling waves. It had five golden dragons embroidered on it, all of them very vivid and lifelike. Every move he made in the robe caused mysterious light to ripple around him, making him look

even more heroic and impressive than before.

This particular Daoist robe had been prepared for him specifically for the grand ceremony earlier, and he'd only worn it for those seven days. Back then, he'd believed it to be a bit too uncomfortable. But now, he quickly donned the robe, and then examined himself in the mirror. Pleased with how incredibly handsome he looked, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously, then finally opened the door and stepped outside.

As the day went on, he strolled through the four divisions of the sect, his chin stuck up as high as ever. Of course, his attire instantly attracted the attention of the River-Defying Sect disciples. During the night, the news about the love letters had spread, and was now the subject of much discussion. As of now, many people were looking over at Bai Xiaochun with odd expressions on their faces.

Of course, most of those odd expressions could be seen on the faces of the male disciples. On the other hand, the female disciples' eyes shone brighter than ever when they saw Bai Xiaochun in his junior patriarch's robe.

In one short hour, Bai Xiaochun was delighted to find that more girls were giving him love letters. They came from the Profound Stream Division, the Pill Stream Division, and even from the Blood Stream Division!

Yet again, the onlookers were completely taken aback, and the male disciples began to cry out in distress.

“Wh-what... what exactly is going on here!?”

“Heavens, the junior patriarch must have received over a hundred love letters between today and yesterday!!”

“Crazy! This is just completely crazy....”

Bai Xiaochun struggled to keep himself under control. Maintaining a soft and warm expression, he accepted the love letters, and then gave slight smiles to the female disciples who delivered them.

When he heard the cries of shock and the exclamations of envy, his heart burst with joy. That was how he spent the following days. During the night, he would spend his time reading the love letters. The matter quickly became the talk of the entire sect.

Everyone had different perspectives on what it meant for Bai Xiaochun to have garnered the affections of almost all the female disciples.

The gossip in the sect was almost all about Bai Xiaochun; everyone was talking about him. People like Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang were fairly jealous. As for Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan, when they heard the news, grim expressions appeared on their faces, and their anger began to burn.

“371 letters!! Hahaha! That’s only in the past couple of days! I

can't believe I actually got 371 love letters!!” Even as the sect was in an uproar, Bai Xiaochun was sitting in his immortal's cave, looking at his piled-up collection of love letters.

“Am I... am I really so outstanding?” Bai Xiaochun was nearly drunk with pride. Waving his right hand, he produced his little copper mirror and began to examine himself. Sighing emotionally, he realized that he needed someone to share this moment with.

“Copper mirror, what do you think? Who is the most outstanding person in the entire River-Defying Sect?!”

Of course, imposter Nightcrypt was inside the copper mirror. As soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun talking, he promptly continued to pretend to be unconscious. He had heard such words uttered by Bai Xiaochun numerous times in the past few days. Considering how terrified he was of Bai Xiaochun, he didn't dare to respond, fearful that if he bungled his response, he would be punished.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a glare. “You think I don't know you're awake, copper mirror!?” he barked. “Answer the question!!”

Terrified, imposter Nightcrypt opened his eyes and then fawningly said, “Master, you are definitely the most outstanding person in the entire River-Defying Sect!!”

“You're lying!!” Bai Xiaochun said angrily.

Imposter Nightcrypt was so frightened by Bai Xiaochun's response that he nearly passed out. That was especially true considering how bloodshot Bai Xiaochun's eyes were. He seemed to be brimming with anger. Imposter Nightcrypt immediately gave a piteous cry and then said, "I'm not lying! I... I hereby swear an oath! I swear I'm not lying at all. You're not just one of the most outstanding persons in all the lands of Heavenspan, you're the most, most, most outstanding!!"

"Really?" Bai Xiaochun asked suspiciously.

Imposter Nightcrypt knew what Bai Xiaochun was trying to do. Therefore, it was with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron that he quickly replied, "Absolutely. Positively! It's true from many points of view!!"

Bai Xiaochun sighed. Looking very pleased, he put the mirror away, and then began to organize the love letters.

"Well since you put it that way, I guess I understand. No wonder so many Junior Sisters love me. So that's how it is!"

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Chapter 351: Come Hang Out In My Immortal's Cave....

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had been placated, imposter Nightcrypt was both howling in frustration, and at the same time, sighing in relief. Even still, his terror regarding Bai Xiaochun only continued to grow.

What worried him most was that he had no idea what things might happen in the future....

Sighing in contentment, Bai Xiaochun put the copper mirror away, then organized the love letters and slowly put them away into his bag of holding. By this point, he was completely determined to show the love letters to his descendants so that they too could bask in his glory.

Feeling wonderful, Bai Xiaochun went on to cultivate the Frigid School Will Evolving Incantation, and then work on his big toe with the Undying Muscles. Glancing outside, he realized that it wasn't dawn yet, and he got a bit irritated.

“What's taking the sun so long to rise?!” he muttered. Having nothing else to do, he decided to ponder the issue of the River-Defying Pill again.

Time slipped by, and soon it was the fourth watch. Outside, everything was quiet. Suddenly Bai Xiaochun's face sank as a cold sensation washed over him, and ripples began to spread out on the floor beneath him. In the blink of an eye, they had filled the entire

immortal's cave.

Although no one on the outside could hear anything, inside the immortal cave, some powerful force seemed to be trying to cut the immortal's cave away from the world around it. At the same time, the sealed mask in his bag of holding erupted with brilliant red light.

Apparently, the mysterious group behind the mask were paying a huge price to try to break the seals and try to communicate with Bai Xiaochun.

The mask flew out of his bag of holding, and the ancient voice began to speak urgently.

“Listen to what I–”

This time the voice managed to speak a bit more than the previous time, leaving Bai Xiaochun petrified. Screaming, he waved his right hand viciously through the air, sending a huge stack of paper talismans slamming into the mask. At the same time, he sent cultivation base power surging out, completely suppressing it.

Despite all of that, the mask was still struggling, and the ancient voice was still speaking. However, despite how viciously the voice struggled, it wasn't possible to tell what it was saying.

“You're forcing me to do this!” Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes bright

red, his heart pulsing with fear. After using all of the paper talismans he had at his disposal, he raced out of his immortal's cave, heading at top speed toward the Heavenspan River at the bottom of Mount River Defiance.

Upon his arrival, he sent a fist strike in the direction of the river, causing a huge wave to roll out across its surface, then scooped up a bunch of the water into a large jade bucket.

He had originally intended to use that bucket to collect water for cultivation purposes, but things were different now. After racing back to his immortal's cave, he saw the mask, still struggling, a muffled voice echoing out from inside of it. This time, the words were more coherent.

“You... don't... need... to refuse–”

“I refuse, dumbass!” Bai Xiaochun roared, shoving the mask down into the bucket of Heavenspan River water.

In that instant, the conversation ended, and everything went silent.

After looking cautiously at the bucket for a moment, Bai Xiaochun finally breathed a sigh of relief, then gave a slight harrumph.

“Did you really think Lord Bai wouldn't be able to come up with a solution? Now, let's see how you act up this time!” Sighing

proudly, Bai Xiaochun sealed the bucket of Heavenspan River water and then put it in his bag of holding.

If the mask had been submerged in Heavenspan River water with imposter Nightcrypt inside, then his soul would have been negatively affected. That was why Bai Xiaochun had chosen to move imposter Nightcrypt into the copper mirror.

Now that the incident with the mask was over, Bai Xiaochun felt as if a huge weight had been lifted off of his shoulders. Not only did he wish to avoid officially offending the mysterious organization, he also wanted to avoid dragging the River-Defying Sect into the matter.

After all, the entire situation was his doing, so unless he was left with absolutely no other options, he didn't want to hand the mask over to the sect to handle. At this moment, he was almost weak with relief that the situation had been resolved.

In the following days, he continued to go out every morning to receive love letters.

Eventually, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai came to Bai Xiaochun and expressed their desire to accompany him during his daily excursions to receive love letters. Bai Xiaochun was naturally unable to refuse them.

When they personally witnessed the female disciples rushing over to give Bai Xiaochun love letters, their eyes went wide with open envy....

“Ninth Fatty, I’ve lost a lot of weight, haven’t I? Why don’t any of the girls give me a love letter?!” Big Fatty Zhang was a bit depressed. The truth was that despite having lost so much weight, he still had a bit of a belly.

Xu Baocai was equally downtrodden. Of course, he had already recorded the details of the legendary love letter incident into his little notebook. At the moment, he felt like he had ants crawling around in his heart....

In response to Big Fatty Zhang’s question, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and cleared his throat.

“To be honest, it takes skill. There’s no need for you two to get anxious. Just be patient, and I’ll explain everything....” Even as Bai Xiaochun was preparing to dazzle them with his insights, he noticed that Xu Baocai’s eyes had gone wide, and that Big Fatty Zhang was staring at something behind him.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped as he realized that it wasn’t just Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai who were acting in such a way. He quickly looked over his shoulder and saw a young woman gliding up the path toward him.

She appeared to about eighteen or nineteen years of age, with large black eyes and plump rosy-red lips. She was charming and graceful as she swayed toward him, refined and beautiful in a way that defied description.

Her garments were simple yet elegant, and covered her slender frame in just the right way. Her skin was as pure as a lotus, and she had long legs that looked like they had been carved by a master craftsman. Her face was so beautiful it was like a work of art. She was clearly a peerless beauty among women.

She was none other than Chen Manyao!

Xu Baocai gasped. “The number one hottest girl in all of the River-Defying Sect!”

Actually, he was the one who had proclaimed her to be the so-called number one hottest girl. Not only had he officially recorded it in his notebook, he had also spread word about the matter personally. He had even dreamed about her on more than one occasion. As soon as he laid eyes on her, he subconsciously puffed his chest out and stood straighter. In the past, he had often come off a bit awkward in front of pretty girls, but as of this moment, he actually seemed a bit heroic.

Big Fatty Zhang subconsciously sucked in his stomach, and his eyes began to sparkle.

Bai Xiaochun heard all of the gasps around him, and noted the reactions of Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang. “You must be exaggerating,” he said. With that, he proceeded to look Chen Manyao up and down. Although he had to admit that she was pretty, he didn’t think that she was so shockingly good-looking as to leave one dumbstruck.

“Hmph,” he thought. “She’s definitely not received as many love letters as I have!” Sticking his chin up, he couldn’t help but muse to himself that this Chen Manyao was far too pretentious.

Just when he was about to stalk off impatiently, Chen Manyao suddenly spoke in a voice that sounded like a hundred spirit creatures singing in a choir.

“Elder Brother Bai, please wait a moment.”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped. This was the first time Chen Manyao had ever greeted him. Turning his head, he watched her approach.

When his gaze fell upon her, she blushed slightly. Looking somewhat embarrassed, she bowed her head, and then pulled a pink handkerchief out of her sleeve, which she quickly placed into his hand.

Seemingly mustering her courage, she said, “If you have time, Elder Brother Bai, why don’t you come to my immortal’s cave tonight at the third watch? We can hang out a bit....”

As the words left her mouth, the flush on her spectacularly beautiful face deepened. Giving him a dazzlingly bewitching look, she turned to leave. As she did, the turn of her head revealed that her fair neck was just as red as her face. Ducking her head, she hurried off into the distance.

Bai Xiaochun was completely taken aback as he looked down at the handkerchief. Considering how many love letters he had received, he was no stranger to receiving them in the form of a handkerchief. However, this was the first time that any girl had been so bold as to actually set a time and place for a date with him....

Bai Xiaochun looked back at Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai and said, “What exactly does she mean by hang out in her immortal’s cave...?”

Big Fatty Zhang simply stood there with his mouth hanging open.

Xu Baocai was as shocked as a wooden chicken, and although he was still standing there as heroically as possible, a look of incredulity could be seen on his face, and his mind was spinning. He had already been jealous of Bai Xiaochun receiving so many love letters, but just now, he had personally witnessed him getting one from Chen Manyao....

Of course, in recent days, Chen Manyao had become the dream girl of many male disciples in the sect. She was completely famous, and existed on a different level than any other female disciple. She was widely known as the number one hottest girl in the sect!

And yet here she had taken the initiative to invite Bai Xiaochun to hang out in her immortal’s cave.

Xu Baocai forced himself to exhale slowly. Jealousy burning in

his heart, he said, “How should I know what she means...?”

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Chapter 352: Come On In, Elder Brother Bai

Bai Xiaochun looked over at Xu Baocai, and could see that he was clearly a bit irritated. Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then glanced at Big Fatty Zhang, whose eyes were glowing with admiration. Big Fatty Zhang even reached out and clasped Bai Xiaochun's shoulder.

“Go on, Xiaochun. Afterward, you'll truly have grown up....”

Coughing dryly, Bai Xiaochun tossed the handkerchief into his bag of holding, then swished his sleeve and grandly announced, “You think I'll go just because she wants me to? Hell no!”

That only seemed to make all the surrounding onlookers admire him even more. However, what no one noticed was that, even as he threw the handkerchief into his bag of holding, a profound light flickered deep in his eyes.

Xu Baocai was in a bad mood for the rest of the day. Sometime in the afternoon, after Bai Xiaochun returned to his immortal's cave, Xu Baocai finally started to spread the news about Chen Manyao's amorous date proposal to Bai Xiaochun.

The gossip spread even faster than before, like a tempest that swept through all four divisions. The matter with the love letters was like a mere ticking timebomb, whereas Chen Manyao was the spark that caused it to explode.

The four divisions were thrown into a complete uproar. Cries of

shock and astonishment filled the air everywhere.

“What!?!? I can’t believe Chen Manyao is wooing Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Th-this... this is just crazy! Who cares if all those other girls gave him love letters. Why did my beloved Junior Sister Chen have to go and do the same thing!?”

“This can’t be true!”

“What!? They’re going to ‘hang out’ in her immortal’s cave tonight during the third watch? What exactly are they planning to do together?!?!”

Word spread through the entire River-Defying Sect, until even the sect leader and the Core Formation elders heard. There were also a few patriarchs who weren’t in secluded meditation at the moment who also caught wind of the matter.

However, whether it was the old news about the love letters, or this new development, none of them took the matter too seriously. In fact, some of them even joked about it a bit. As for Li Qinghou, he had a serious discussion with Xu Meixiang about what type of person Chen Manyao was....

Two of the patriarchs who happened to be out of their secluded meditation were Nascent Soul patriarchs from the Pill Stream Division, and they were actually very pleased with this development.

The Profound Stream Division Nascent Soul experts were also fairly excited. They knew how important Bai Xiaochun was to the sect; if one of the disciples from their division became Bai Xiaochun's Daoist partner, it would be of incredible benefit to them.

However, the patriarchs of the Spirit Stream Division, as well as Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong, all felt headaches coming on. That was especially true of Zheng Yuandong, who knew Bai Xiaochun better than most. This new development, coupled with the way Bai Xiaochun had been strolling around the sect every day recently, accepting love letters, caused him to let out a long sigh.

“When is Xiaochun going to grow up a little bit more?” he thought. “He's already reached Gold Core! Maybe by the time he reaches Nascent Soul he'll be a bit better?” In the end, he simply shook his head. By this point, he had actually given up on the hope that Bai Xiaochun's personality would change much.

Considering the entire sect was talking about the matter, it didn't take long before Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei heard about what was happening. Both of them immediately started to get anxious. Although they had been angered by the love letter situation, they hadn't viewed it as a serious threat. This was different. This latest deadly intrusion by Chen Manyao left both young women filled with sensations of intense crisis.

“Slut!!”

“Completely shameless!!”

Both of them sat in their Immortal’s cave, stewing in rage. Song Junwan had an explosive temper, and Hou Xiaomei was as fiery as a hot pepper sometimes. Both of them seemed on the verge of erupting.

For the first time ever, they dropped their differences and met together to discuss the situation. After hashing things out, they made an agreement; that very day when evening fell, they would strike!

Bai Xiaochun was currently sitting in his immortal’s cave, looking at Chen Manyao’s handkerchief, a strange light flickering in his eyes as he thought about the situation. Suddenly, his face fell as he detected a killing aura just outside of his immortal’s cave. Looking over his shoulder, he realized that Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei were standing outside.

Shivering with fear, he quickly put the handkerchief away, then opened the door, a warm smile on his face.

“Big Sis Song, Xiaomei, what are you two doing here? The two of you have completely occupied my thoughts lately! I’ve missed you so much....”

Song Junwan’s eyes went wide, and she snorted coldly. Completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun, she stalked into the immortal’s cave and inspected every inch of it. Then she gave Bai Xiaochun another glare before leaving.

Even as Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped in surprise, Hou Xiaomei stepped forward and grabbed him by the arm.

"I've missed you too, Big Bro Xiaochun. I'm going to stay here with you tonight!"

"Huh?" Bai Xiaochun said, stunned.

"What's wrong, Big Bro Xiaochun?" she said, tears welling up in her eyes as she looked up at him. "You don't want to spend time with me?"

Bai Xiaochun shook his head. Slapping his chest, he said, "Of course I want to spend time with you. How about—"

Before he could finish speaking, Hou Xiaomei smiled and dragged him into the immortal's cave. Once inside, she sat down and started talking, and didn't stop for the entire night. Bai Xiaochun could only watch as time passed by. When the third watch came, he let out a long sigh.

Hou Xiaomei's eyes narrowed. "What's wrong, Big Bro Xiaochun? Are you thinking about your date with Elder Sister Chen Manyao that I heard about?"

Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled. Making himself the picture of righteousness, he said, "Who cares if she asked me on a date!? I'm not going to go just because she wants me to. I'm Bai Xiaochun, the

junior patriarch of the sect. No way would I go!”

The following morning at dawn, Hou Xiaomei left, and Bai Xiaochun finally breathed a sigh of relief. But then, Song Junwan arrived. And that was how the next day and night went.

For the following month, Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei took turns standing guard over Bai Xiaochun, giving him no chance to accept any love letters and no chance to go on any dates....

Thankfully for Bai Xiaochun, the sect had just been established, and there were many tasks at hand. Eventually, both Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan were called away on various assignments. At long last, he was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

However, during the month which had passed, the matter of the love letter, as well as the situation with Chen Manyao, had become a thing of the past. Furthermore, the actions of Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei had put an end to the aspirations of the other female disciples.

By the time Bai Xiaochun was finally free to walk around in the sect, he was very disappointed to discover that not a single person approached to hand him a love letter.

“I should have known this would happen....” he thought, crestfallen. Not willing to accept the situation, he strolled around the entire sect a few times over the following days, until he was completely convinced that there were no love letters to be had.

Sighing dejectedly, he returned to his immortal's cave where he slumped in a daze. Finally, late in the night, he looked out at the darkness and his eyes narrowed.

“As the junior patriarch of the sect, it wouldn't be very appropriate to simply ignore Chen Manyao's request for a date. I think I should go over and see exactly what she has planned!” Eyes flickering, he decided that he really had to make a decision based on the overall situation, especially considering his status in the sect. Clearing his throat, he cautiously made his way through the sect, being careful to avoid notice. Soon, he found himself outside of Chen Manyao's immortal's cave.

The mountains of the Pill Stream Division were quiet this night. Bai Xiaochun scouted the immediate vicinity to make sure there was nobody lying in wait, and then, he inspected the area surrounding the cave. He even went so far as to use his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, which allowed him to see the form of a young woman sitting in meditation inside the cave.

Seeing that there didn't appear to be any traps, Bai Xiaochun finally felt a bit more at ease.

It was a very quiet and peaceful location. A narrow path led up to the immortal's cave, next to which was a small cistern filled with lotuses. Milky moonlight cascaded down onto the violet lotuses, which cast a lovely fragrance out into the night.

Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back, looked up at the moon, and then cleared his throat.

“Junior Sister Chen, are you asleep? It’s me, the junior patriarch. I’ve come for our date.”

Almost instantly, a shocked voice responded from within the immortal’s cave.

“Is that you, Elder Brother Bai?” Even as Chen Manyao’s soft voice could be heard, the door to the immortal’s cave swung open, and she appeared in the open. She was wearing a tight-fitting blouse that completely revealed her curvaceous figure, and looked especially attractive because of the moonlight.

“Elder Brother Bai, please come in,” she said, flashing a smile that made flowers look dull. She turned and gestured for him to enter.

Bai Xiaochun looked her up and down, but didn’t take a step forward. An enigmatic smile appeared on his face, as well as something fierce and a bit domineering!

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Chapter 353: The So-Called Wildlands!

The flush on Chen Manyao's face deepened. At the moment, she almost felt like she was standing there naked in front of Bai Xiaochun. Stepping back, she angrily said, "Elder Brother Bai...."

Bai Xiaochun shook his head, his eyes shining intimidatingly. "Very amusing. Unfortunately, your acting skills aren't up to par, Chen Manyao. You gave me a handkerchief for absolutely no reason! You asked me to come at the third watch, without any explanation!

"I sat around for an entire month, and you never sent me a message.... Chen Manyao, do you really think that the junior patriarch of the sect has the intelligence of a three-year-old child? Or did you take me for one of those idiots who nearly passes out as soon as he sees a pretty woman?! Did you secretly arrange for that whole love letter situation, all to give yourself a chance to launch a sneak attack during the chaos?!"

Every word Bai Xiaochun spoke was as cold as ice, and in the end, he unleashed the power of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core cultivation base, causing intense pressure to weigh down. A powerful wind even swept through the area, causing Chen Manyao's face to fall, and her knees to tremble.

After all, she was only in the Foundation Establishment stage!

Bai Xiaochun clasped his hands behind his back and stuck his chin up. He looked more somber than ever, with a powerfully

murderous aura and a gaze as sharp as a blade. “I didn’t really need to come here, but as the junior patriarch, how could I not notice all the clues? Naturally, I had no other choice than to come and see what your true purpose in all of this is!”

Chen Manyao started backing up. “Elder Brother Bai, I...”

Before she could continue, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flashed with cold light, and he waved his hand, sending a dagger-shaped horn flying out to hover above him, which instantly began to radiate the pressure of a precious treasure. In combination with the Heaven-Dao Gold Core cultivation base fluctuations, it caused an intensely murderous air to begin to crush down onto Chen Manyao.

That dagger-shaped horn was none other than Bai Xiaochun’s Renegade Dragon Horn!

“Don’t move even a muscle,” he said casually. “You have three chances to explain yourself properly, and what you just said counts as one of those chances. Don’t forget that, as the junior patriarch, I have the authority to execute any disciple I wish.”

Although he spoke the words as if he were having an ordinary conversation, he had actually pushed the big toe of his left foot down into the ground, and had prepared it to unleash explosive force. If anything happened, he would instantly leave the area.

His Landscape of Nine Provinces was also ready to be used at a moment’s notice.

Chen Manyao stopped moving, and gave Bai Xiaochun a deep look. She didn't fail to notice that Bai Xiaochun had stopped right on the edge of the spell formation she'd set up. Clearly, he had come well-prepared.

For the first time, fear of Bai Xiaochun was beginning to take hold in her heart. Finally, she chuckled, and dropped the bashful act she had put on from before. Now, a mysterious light gleamed in her eyes.

Smiling, she said, "No wonder those old fogies care so much about you.... Bai Xiaochun, I bear you no ill will. Of that I can swear an oath. The reason I wanted you to come here was so that you could meet a certain person!"

"You still have one chance left!" Bai Xiaochun said coolly. The Renegade Dragon Horn hovering above him began to emit a cold light.

Chen Manyao's face twitched. After a moment of silence, she gritted her teeth and said, "Nightcrypt. Mask. Bai Xiaochun. Mysterious group. Spy. Relic of eternal indestructibility!"

A grim expression overtook Bai Xiaochun's face, and his eyes widened. Mind reeling, he didn't hesitate for even a moment to send the Renegade Dragon Horn flying forward toward Chen Manyao. At the same time, he pushed down with his big toe, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as he shot backward. Simultaneously, he produced the Landscape of Nine Provinces.

Currently, his heart was pounding. Although he had noticed that there was something suspicious about Chen Manyao, never could he have imagined that she actually worked for that same mysterious group he'd been in contact with for so long!

In the exact same moment that he took action, a black vortex appeared on Chen Manyao's forehead, from within which shot streams of black energy that wrapped up the Renegade Dragon Horn. Despite the fact that the horn was backed by Bai Xiaochun's Gold Core power, it instantly lurched to a stop.

At the same time, an ancient voice echoed out from within the black strands.

"Fellow Daoist, please just trust me this once. I had no choice but to use this method to make contact. I even revealed the secret identity of my apprentice Yao'er. I'm willing to risk her life to get the chance to talk with you. Please, can't you just trust me?!?"

"You can leave at any time you wish. Just let me say a few things. If you don't like what you hear, I won't try to stop you from leaving!!" Even as the words echoed out, the black strands formed together into the vague image of an old man. Within that old man's eyes could be seen complex emotions, profound secrets, and even more surprising, respect and politeness toward Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun forced his breathing under control. By this point, he was high up in the air. Furthermore, the fluctuations rolling out from the area had been noticed by others in the River-Defying Sect, and some of the nearby cultivators on patrol flew over, including a late Core Formation elder.

“Junior Patriarch, what’s wrong?”

“What happened?!” The patrolling cultivators looked around suspiciously, and yet strangely, didn’t seem to notice the old man formed from black strands of energy. The only thing they could see was Bai Xiaochun, hovering there in midair, cultivation base power rippling out from him.

Everything down below was invisible to them.

The old man quickly said, “The only way for anyone to see or even detect me would be if a Deva Realm expert were in the River-Defying Sect. However, you are not within the cloaked area, so they can see you!”

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was the only one who heard him speaking.

Bai Xiaochun’s face was grim as he first looked over at the suspicious cultivators who’d flown over, then looked back down at the image of the old man.

Seeing Bai Xiaochun’s reticence, the old man hurriedly continued, “The lands of Heavenspan are vast. The Heavenspan Sea is in the middle, and four great rivers spread out in the four directions from that sea. Those are the eastern, western, southern and northern cultivation worlds!”

“Each of the four major rivers splits up into four smaller rivers, which in turn become four streams. Beyond the streams are countless deltas that stretch further than the imagination can process. Although it seems like the spiritual energy of the Heavenspan Rivers is infinite, the truth is that when compared with the lands of Heavenspan as a whole, that spiritual energy is negligible. In fact, it’s not even enough to fill half of the realm!

“The rest of the lands of Heavenspan are places that the spiritual energy of the Heavenspan Rivers don’t touch, places that have come to be known as the Wildlands!” As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the man’s explanation, his mind began to spin.

In the past, he had wondered about this very subject. The only explanation he had ever been given was that the places without the aura of the Heavenspan River were restricted areas where cultivators couldn’t survive!

The words being spoken crashed like thunder in his mind. Based on what he could tell, it didn’t seem like this old man was lying.

Tone serious, the old man continued, “By way of illustration, the areas with the spiritual energy of the Heavenspan River, the four major rivers and the riversource sects, are like the countries that exist in the mortal world. As for the people who live in the Wildlands, we are like defectors or even rebels!

“I am from the Wildlands, and the Blood Stream Sect’s Blood Ancestor also came from the Wildlands!

“It is only because of some unique matters pertaining to Karma that the Blood Ancestor’s corpse stayed in the Heavenspan River!”

Bai Xiaochun’s pupils constricted. He had long wondered why the mysterious organization was so interested in the relic of eternal indestructibility that was located on the Blood Ancestor. Based on the old man’s explanation, it now started to make more sense.

“We don’t really need the relic of eternal indestructibility. If you want it, then go ahead and keep it. The reason for my change in attitude, and the reason I’m telling these things to you, is that because of the legacy of the Blood Ancestor, you have become the second generation Blood Ancestor!

“In the final analysis, you have sown Karma with us in the Wildlands!” The old man was already starting to calm down. As long as Bai Xiaochun didn’t immediately leave, he would have his chance to explain things, and maybe even discuss matters.

What he feared the most was that Bai Xiaochun would do the same thing he’d done before, and refuse to even listen to him.

“I tried to communicate with you via the mask, but you were too cautious. Therefore, I took a great risk, and expended significant resources, to have Yao’er enact the plan to get you over here!

“I represent an alliance of cities within the Wildlands, and we hope to keep in contact with you long-term. An arrangement like that would benefit you because we have agents in virtually all of

the sects in all the four major rivers. We can provide you help in many ways, and we can also keep you informed about anything important happening in the world!

“However, you would also need to do things for us....” With that, the old man clasped hands and bowed deeply to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken, and was almost on the verge of leaving. However, he couldn’t find fault with anything the old man had said, and in fact, many of his own questions had been answered. It was also true that revealing Chen Manyao’s secret identity was in fact a show of good faith.

That was especially true considering that the old man had even admitted to setting up the situation with the love letters. It seemed that the old man was willing to explain the answer to any question he had.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun turned his attention to the patrolling cultivators, who, having checked the area and found nothing amiss, were looking at him hesitantly.

“You may take your leave,” he said, “all of you. I just had a bad feeling a few moments ago. Sorry for the trouble.” With that, he clasped hands and bowed to them.

The Gold Core elder looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, but didn’t ask any further questions. Nodding, he led his men off.

Soon, everything was quiet again.

“So,” Bai Xiaochun suddenly said, “you can answer any question that I have?”

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Chapter 354: Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had sent away the patrolling cultivators, the old man finally breathed a deep sigh of relief. He knew that he had struck a chord, and now the two of them could truly interact.

“I can’t guarantee that I’ll be able to tell you anything. But there are very few things the Wildlands don’t know about. We have agents all over the lands of Heavenspan. And by that, I mean the Lower Reaches, the Middle Reaches, and even at the the sources of the rivers! We have people everywhere!” After hearing this first question of Bai Xiaochun’s, the old man had been a bit hesitant. However, after a moment of careful thought, he had decided that the best thing would be to tell the truth. There was even a certain pride to his tone. After all, he was very confident in his ability to generate intelligence reports.

Bai Xiaochun was silent for a moment, and then he said, “Fine. I want information about a person!”

“What level of cultivation base?” the old man replied immediately.

Bai Xiaochun thought about it, then said, “Should be Foundation Establishment!”

“Foundation Establishment cultivation base? Simple. Since this is our first time working together, how about I provide the information for free? No cost whatsoever. Just tell me the person’s

surname and given name, and what specifically you want to know.” The old man was immediately relieved. Although there were a lot of Foundation Establishment cultivators in the lands of Heavenspan, it was a simple matter for the Wildlands to get information about them. Furthermore, there was virtually no risk involved.

Bai Xiaochun had been a bit skeptical at first, but after seeing how confident the old man was, hope started to rise up in his heart.

“Her name is Du Lingfei. At least, she... she started out at the Spirit Stream Sect with that name. Then I ran into her again in the Blood Stream Sect’s trial by fire for the blood master position. I want to know who she really is!!”

“Find out her true identity? Even if those are the only things you know about her, that’s enough for us to uncover her identity. Please wait a moment!” Smiling confidently, the old man faded away, having returned to the Wildlands to carry out the search.

Chen Manyao was sitting off to the side cross-legged, her eyes closed. Apparently, the old man had sent her into a trance and sealed her, in order to prevent damage to her soul while he used her as a medium.

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and waited silently. Time passed. An hour flew by. The old man had not returned, and Bai Xiaochun was starting to get nervous.

More time went by, enough for half an incense stick to burn. Suddenly, a tremor passed through Chen Manyao, and black strands flew out of her forehead again, which then took shape into the image of the old man.

However, this time, he seemed a bit ashen-faced. A strange light could be seen in his eyes as he looked at Bai Xiaochun, and even confusion.

“Well?” Bai Xiaochun quickly asked. “What information do you have?!”

The old man hesitated, then said, “Why don’t you ask about someone else?”

“Huh?” Bai Xiaochun said, both shocked and angry. “Didn’t you say it would be a simple task? It’s just information about a person. What happened? You couldn’t find her?”

The old man smiled wryly. Along with the confusion in his eyes was a gleam of terror. After a moment passed, he shook his head. “We really couldn’t find any information.”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes widened. After looking at the old man for a moment, he suddenly pulled his bag of holding out and threw it onto the ground.

“The little turtle is in there. I can’t find him, but I know he’s there, and you guys should be able to find him. Take the bag and

tell me who Du Lingfei is!”

The man looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, then smiled and decided not to hold anything back. “Really, why don’t you ask about someone else? I can’t get any information about this Du Lingfei. Just moments ago, I sent people to investigate, and the entire city started shaking. Signs and portents were seen in heaven and earth! Most terrifying of all was that in the briefest of moments, a large portion of my agents out in the world suddenly died!

“Does it sound to you like I can keep investigating? Whoever this person is, she’s either profoundly mysterious or backed by a power too incredible to imagine. I would suggest you refrain from provoking her, and it would probably be best if you never ran into her again.”

Everything he had just said was the truth. The investigation he had just ordered had resulted in a cataclysmic response. He almost couldn’t believe that a casual question on the part of Bai Xiaochun could lead to such drastic upheavals. It also left him even more amazed and intrigued by Bai Xiaochun’s own secrets.

Bai Xiaochun stood there silently for a moment, his mind and heart battered by huge waves of shock. He could tell that the man hadn’t been lying to him. After a moment passed, he said, “You didn’t turn up even the slightest clue?”

Seeing how determined Bai Xiaochun was, the old man hesitated. Considering that he wanted to maintain a long-term relationship with him, he finally gritted his teeth and said, “There is only one clue. Most of my agents who were just killed met their deaths in

the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! As for what that indicates, you can be the judge for yourself!”

With that, the old man clasped hands and bowed.

“If you want to contact me, you can do so at any time via the mask. If you’d rather not use the mask, then you can make use of Yao’er. She might be my agent, but she bears no ill will toward the River-Defying Sect. I hope you can show her some kindness....” With that, the man broke up into countless black strands that flew back into Chen Manyao’s forehead.

Chen Manyao shivered, then opened her eyes. When she saw Bai Xiaochun standing there, it seemed like she wanted to say something. However, after a moment, she simply gave a curtsying bow, then went back inside her immortal’s cave.

Bai Xiaochun hovered in midair, looking up at the starry sky and the moon. Many thoughts ran through his head.

“The fact that most of the casualties among his agents were in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect indicates that I should be able to find more clues about Du Lingfei there.

“Just who exactly are you, Du Lingfei...?”

“Trying to track you down like this is really exhausting....” He shook his head slowly. He had long since come to believe that the matter of Du Lingfei was a thing of the past. However, there had

always been questions in his heart that he couldn't quite forget about.

With that, he turned and headed back to Mount River Defiance. However, instead of going to his immortal's cave, he paid a visit to Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong.

By now, Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn't keep so many secrets from the sect. Therefore, he explained everything about Chen Manyao, the Wildlands, and the mask.

He left at dawn, having revealed everything to his Elder Brother sect leader. As for what would happen next, he didn't even want to think about it. However the sect chose to deal with the situation, he would support the decision.

Of course, Zheng Yuandong couldn't make a decision about something so weighty by himself, so he consulted with the patriarchs of the four divisions. The patriarchs summoned Chen Manyao, and in the end, nothing much happened. Everything soon went back to normal.

Chen Manyao remained in the River-Defying Sect, the celestial goddess to many of the male disciples. She was still a Chosen, and only Bai Xiaochun and the patriarchs, as well as Zheng Yuandong, knew where she truly came from. Apparently, some sort of agreement had been reached....

With that matter having been handled, Bai Xiaochun returned his focus to cultivation. Whether it was the Frigid School Will-

Evolving Incantation or the Undying Muscles, he made progress with all of them. He was in the Middle Reaches now, in one of the four great sects. The spiritual power of heaven and earth was strong here, much stronger than in the Lower Reaches. Therefore, his speed of progress improved.

Of course, he wasn't the only one to benefit. Zhou Xinqi and the other Chosen like her were all in secluded meditation, gradually making their way toward the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

After that came Core Formation, although none of them would dare to do what Bai Xiaochun had done, and reach for Core Formation in the heat of the moment. Most of them would take at least half a sixty-year-cycle to prepare before attempting the critical breakthrough.

As was to be expected, many of them were competing to see who could reach Core Formation first. Furthermore, not all of them got along, and thus were waiting until Core Formation to try to settle their differences.

Only people like Song Junwan, who had long since reached the great circle, could attempt to step into Core Formation with only a few years of preparation.

As for people like Big Fatty Zhang, Xu Baocai, Hou Xiaomei, Third Fatty Hei, and others, the improved spiritual energy in the Middle Reaches also helped them in their cultivation. That was especially true of Big Fatty Zhang, who made the most startling progress of all. He was already in mid Foundation Establishment.

Everyone in the River-Defying Sect was making progress. In fact, the first wave of Qi Condensation cultivators had already been sent to locations set aside by the River-Defying Sect for the Earthstring Foundation Establishment trials by fire.

Middle Reaches sects had trials by fire that were beyond compare with those in the Lower Reaches.

As the sect seethed with activity, Bruiser finally returned. He appeared out of the blue, and as soon as he stopped in front of the immortal's cave, Bai Xiaochun rushed out to meet him.

Bruiser was covered with wounds and scars, many of which seemed to run very deep.

However, he seemed to be in a very good mood, and his eyes were shining brightly. Unexpectedly, the aura of an imminent breakthrough was strong upon him!

Bruiser had gone missing almost as soon as the construction work on the new sect headquarters had begun. Bai Xiaochun had been able to sense that he was alive, and had assumed that he'd gone off to look for some female beasts to spend time with. It was only now that he realized his assumption had been incorrect.

As Bai Xiaochun's eyes met Bruiser's, he realized that the reason Bruiser had gone missing was that he'd left for deadly training.

Bruiser had come to view himself as a bit useless; on numerous occasions in which Bai Xiaochun had faced deadly crises, he had been completely unable to help!

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Chapter 355: Bruiser's Tribulation!

Bai Xiaochun felt a lump forming in his throat.

“Don’t do this kind of thing again, okay!” he said loudly. “I’m your father! Are kids supposed to protect their dad? No! I’m supposed to protect you! Wait until I’m old and feeble, then you can protect me!”

“Also, don’t just disappear next time. If you want to go do something, say something to me first!”

Eyes glittering, Bruiser nudged Bai Xiaochun with his head, then dropped down, rolled over onto his back, and stuck his tongue out. He looked very charming, causing the warm feelings inside of Bai Xiaochun to grow even stronger.

Reaching out, he sent some of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core aura into Bruiser, straightening out his qi passageways. Bruiser hummed contentedly, and even reached his head up and licked Bai Xiaochun’s face.

After healing Bruiser’s internal injuries, Bai Xiaochun looked at the wounds on his body, then produced a large quantity of medicinal pill for him to consume.

Each and every one of those pills could be sold for quite a few spirit stones, but when it came to Bruiser, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t stingy at all. The main thing he was worried about was making sure that Bruiser’s injuries didn’t worsen.

After consuming the medicinal pills, Bruiser bared his teeth in a fond smile. As of this moment, Bruiser and Bai Xiaochun looked very much like family.

Bai Xiaochun went on to scold Bruiser a bit more, and Bruiser wagged his tail and continued to rub up against Bai Xiaochun. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun didn't have the heart to reprimand him anymore.

After they went back into the immortal's cave, Bruiser's wounds continued to fade away, and the breakthrough aura on him grew even stronger.

Bai Xiaochun could tell that Bruiser was definitely on the verge of breaking through to Core Formation. Core Formation was of great significance to battle beasts. Although battle beasts' Tribulations weren't like cultivators', they were still dangerous. Furthermore, Bruiser was a beast king, so his Tribulation would be different from that of ordinary battle beasts.

Worried, Bai Xiaochun went to seek the counsel of Zheng Yuandong. After all, Bruiser was very important to the River-Defying Sect as a whole, and especially the Spirit Stream Division. Zheng Yuandong immediately issued a Dharmic decree, identifying the peak of Mount River Defiance as the location where Bruiser would attempt to step into Core Formation.

A large number of spell formations were set up, and work went underway to gather the spiritual energy of heaven and earth in

that location. In addition, a large number of Core Formation cultivators were called upon to stand as Dharma protectors.

Even Patriarch Li Zimo, at Bai Xiaochun's request, ended his session of secluded meditation to also stand as Dharma protector.

Bai Xiaochun paid visits to the other three divisions as well, and as a result, they all offered assistance. The Blood Stream Division provided several precious treasures designed for transcending tribulation, and the Pill Stream Division assigned over a thousand disciples to concoct pills.

As for the Profound Stream Division, they were the ones tasked with creating special spell formations on the mountain peak.

The power of all four divisions had been called on for this special occasion of Core Formation. It was enough to make any ordinary disciple envious. Of course, some of that had to do with Bruiser being a beast king, but more of it was because of Bai Xiaochun's status.

Seven days later, when Bruiser was completely healed, and the aura of an imminent breakthrough was strong, rumbling sounds echoed out from the summit of Mount River Defiance.

Heaven and earth shook, and the clouds converged, along with intense, thunderous rumblings. Bruiser took his place on the altar at the mountain's summit, throwing his head back and roaring into the heavens, a roar that seemed capable of piercing the clouds.

The cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were shaken, and quite a few people flew up to see what was happening.

“Bruiser’s reaching Core Formation!!”

“Beast king Core Formation is so impressive!”

“Beast kings are rare enough, and Bruiser is like a beast king among beast kings! Of course this is going to be extraordinary!”

As the discussions raged, the battle beasts in the Spirit Stream Division began to howl in support of Bruiser. The Heavenhorn ink dragon appeared, looking up into the sky, and then over at Bruiser, nervousness and anticipation gleaming in its eyes.

Bai Xiaochun stood next to Bruiser, eyes sparkling. Of course, he was standing as Bruiser’s primary Dharma protector.

Suddenly, the clouds converged together, and a black lightning bolt appeared, which immediately began to descend toward the altar on Mount River Defiance.

Roaring, Bruiser launched into the air, refusing to draw help from the spell formations or the surrounding Core Formation Dharma protectors.

As he closed in, he viciously head-butted the lightning bolt.

BOOM!

Heaven and earth trembled as the lightning bolt shattered into countless sparks which rained down in all directions. Bruiser howled in delight, turning to look proudly at Bai Xiaochun before looking back up into the sky.

In response to Bruiser's smug behavior, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. After all, it almost seemed like something he would do. Inside, his anxiety was mounting.

"Stay focused!" he called out. "If things get out of hand, get back down here. Don't worry, it won't be a loss of face...."

In almost the exact same instant that the words left his mouth, a second lightning bolt began to fall. Even as Bruiser bashed into it, destroying it, a third lightning bolt appeared, then a fourth and a fifth.

Each of the lightning bolts was larger than the one before it, and they descended toward Bruiser with incredible speed. Trembling, Bruiser roared and continued to face them head-on.

The third lightning bolt sent Bruiser tumbling back down to the ground, where he landed inside the spell formation. Just when Bai Xiaochun was about to hurry forward to help, Bruiser gobbled up some of the medicinal pills that had been placed nearby. Eyes blazing red, he threw his head back and let out an enraged roar, then shot back up into the air, rocketing up with incredible speed, a beam of light surrounded by shocking violet flames.

Then, astonishingly, he actually slammed into the Tribulation clouds up above!

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath; Bruiser seemed even crazier than he himself.

Even Patriarch Li Zimo was surprised to see what was happening, and the Core Formation cultivators who flanked him in midair were also shocked by Bruiser's valiance.

Disciples from the other four divisions who were observing the event were crying out in shock.

“This... this is incredible!!”

“Heavens! Is Bruiser going to destroy the Tribulation clouds?!”

Even as their voices rose up, the clouds seethed as a seventh, eighth, and ninth lightning bolt began to build up power. Then, gasps rang out as Bruiser yet again slammed into the cloud layer.

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The clouds collapsed, and the three bolts of Tribulation Lightning exploded, sending out a powerful shockwave that left all the onlookers astonished.

Amidst the collapsing clouds, Bruiser rapidly grew in size until he was 600 meters long, a sea of violet flames surrounding his feet as he threw his head back and let loose a long cry.

As his cry echoed out, he continued to grow larger, his body radiating intense energy of heaven and earth. It was as if he were experiencing a baptism of sorts, and as a result, an aura spread out from him the likes of which was the subject of ultimate respect. It was the aura of a beast king!

It grew stronger and more powerful until all hearts trembled in response. As for Bai Xiaochun, his excitement was continuing to mount.

As the beast king aura raged, and the energy of heaven and earth converged, a violet-colored Core could be seen forming above Bruiser.

It radiated scintillating light, sending out a medicinal aura that left everyone in the area feeling refreshed and energized.

Bai Xiaochun was getting even more nervous. Seven days earlier, he had consulted the ancient records, as well as Patriarch Li Zimo, and had come to find that battle beast Core Formation usually didn't involve Tribulation Lightning. That only came with beast king Tribulation.

After the Tribulation Lightning was when heaven and earth formed the Core, which Bruiser would then consume. That was actually the most dangerous part of the process.

Because the beast king aura formed a natural core of heaven and earth, it could be used by other cultivators or beasts for numerous purposes. Whether it was for cultivators to concoct spirit medicines, or for other beasts for use as a second core, it was something intrinsically attractive to many. In fact, if another beast managed to wrest it away, they could refine their own blood and gain a chance to rise up to the level of a beast king!

Even as Bai Xiaochun looked on nervously, and the Violet Core was moments away from condensing completely, a cry echoed out that could shake heaven and earth!

It seemed capable of piercing metal, of stabbing directly into the heart and mind.

Off in the distance, a flying snake could be seen, fully 3,000 meters long. It shot through the air toward Bruiser's Violet Core, eyes radiating sinister light. Shockingly, this snake had an aura similar to Bruiser's!

This flying snake was another beast king!

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Chapter 356: Beast King Violet Core!

The flying snake was roughly 3,000 meters long and 30 meters thick. It almost looked like a flood dragon as opposed to a serpent, especially considering that it had two long, curved horns, and three-clawed talons!

Its scales reflected dazzling sunlight, and if one examined it closely, they would detect a holy air to it.

The beast king aura which roiled out from it made it seem like the monarch of all beasts, and caused all of the River-Defying Sect's battle beasts to tremble. The pressure weighing down on their blood made it such that none of them dared to even think about fighting back against the huge snake.

The only exception was the Heavenhorn ink dragon, whose scales stood on end as it howled in defiance.

Heaven and earth went dim, and a huge wind kicked up. Down below, the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were completely astonished, and began to cry out in surprise.

“That’s....”

“Another beast king!!”

In the cultivation world of the Lower Reaches, beast kings were rare, and few people even had a chance to see a single one in their

entire lives. Bruiser's birth had been unexpected and quite coincidental.

In the Middle Reaches, beast kings were also rare. However, considering how vast of a territory the Middle Reaches covered, they were not impossible to find. In fact, quite a few roamed the depths of the mountains and jungles.

In the moment that the flying snake beast king appeared, Li Zimo's face flickered, and he rose to his feet, brilliant light shining in his eyes. His Nascent Soul aura erupted out, and he flicked his sleeve, sending a powerful gale force wind shooting toward the flying snake.

Behind him, Bruiser threw his head back and howled, causing his own beast king aura to surge, almost as if he wished to outshine the flying snake.

However, it was obvious that whether it was in terms of aura or cultivation base, the flying snake far surpassed Bruiser. Bruiser was like a baby, and the flying snake was like an adult.

Behind Li Zimo and Bruiser, there was another aura that rumbled out, which transformed into a beam of blood-colored qi that shot up into the clouds. It was... Bai Xiaochun!

That pillar was formed from the power of Bai Xiaochun's qi and blood, and because of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core cultivation base, it was even tinged with golden light.

“How dare you!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, his eyes crimson. Flying up into the air, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, sending a black light flying out of his bag of holding. It was none other than the Renegade Dragon Horn, which shot toward the flying snake, fueled by the full power of Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base.

At the same time, he opened his third eye, causing violet light to spill out onto the creature.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as Li Zimo’s tempest bore down on the flying snake. A moment later, Bai Xiaochun’s Renegade Dragon Horn also closed in, bursting with a Heaven-Dao aura. The flying snake’s eyes widened, and it quickly coiled up, apparently relying only on its fleshly body power to defend itself.

Incredible rumbling echoed out as the tempest collapsed, and the Renegade Dragon Horn was sent spinning off to the side. At the same time, the flying snake was shoved backward by a full 300 meters.

Bruiser let out another roar of rage, turning to glare at the flying snake with a look of utter ferocity. However, he also had his misgivings; he was currently at a critical juncture as his Violet Core continued to form.

The flying snake was a big threat, and made Bruiser very, very uneasy. In that moment, a tiny figure suddenly appeared next to him, reached out, and placed a hand on his side.

Bruiser was currently 300 meters tall, so that figure was miniscule in comparison. However, the hand which reached out to him seemed powerful enough to shake mountains, and as soon as it touched him, all of his anxiety and nervousness vanished.

That figure was none other than Bai Xiaochun!

“Focus on your Core Formation,” he said. “I’ll take care of everything else!” As he spoke, his gaze fell upon the greedy flying snake some distance away.

Moments later, Li Zimo appeared next to Bai Xiaochun, and the Core Formation Dharma protectors flew up into the air as well.

At the same time, the Profound Stream Division’s spell formation erupted with power, materializing nine greatswords which immediately locked onto the flying snake.

The flying snake’s cold eyes widened. It was a beast king, and in the Nascent Soul level at that. However... this was the River-Defying Sect, one of the four great sects of the Middle Reaches, and the flying snake wouldn’t intentionally provoke them unless it was absolutely necessary.

Bruiser’s Core Formation had been so enticing that it simply followed its feelings and tried to grab the Violet Core. With Bruiser’s beast king core, a breakthrough from Nascent Soul into the Deva Realm would have been much more possible.

The cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were equally leery of the snake. Even Li Zimo didn't wish to tangle with a fully-developed beast king unless absolutely necessary.

Beast kings were capable of summoning countless lesser beasts to fight for them, and if that happened, it would put the River-Defying Sect in a very unfavorable situation.

The two sides were in somewhat of a deadlock as they stared at each other. However, that was when even more streams of Nascent Soul divine sense flew out and locked onto the flying snake.

Although the River-Defying Sect didn't want to tangle with a beast king, if it truly attempted to attack the sect, then they wouldn't hold back in the fighting. They would kill the beast no matter the cost.

Li Zimo's eyes narrowed, and he began to speak in a voice as cold as ice. "Considering you've practiced cultivation all the way to your current level, your excellency, it's only appropriate to address you as a Fellow Daoist. Today, the River-Defying Sect's champion battle beast is stepping into Core Formation. In order to prevent any misunderstandings, Fellow Daoist, would you kindly take your leave?!"

The snake's eyes glittered defiantly, and it looked over at Bruiser. By that time, the Violet Core above Bruiser was shining with dazzling light.

The strange aroma continued to billow out in all directions as the

Violet Core... formed!

In that moment, Bruiser's eyes shone with intense excitement as he watched the Violet Core shoot toward his open mouth. Just when he was about to swallow it up, the air next to him distorted and... a hand reached out to grab the Violet Core!

Everyone was shocked by this sudden development. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes were completely bloodshot, and a cry of rage escaped his lips as he unhesitatingly unleashed a fist strike onto the outstretched hand.

At the same time, three cold snorts echoed out from Mount River Defiance, and Master Godwind, Frigidsect, and Patriarch Crimson soul instantly teleported out. Surprisingly, none of them showed any signs of having recently been in secluded meditation; apparently, they had actually been watching over the proceedings the entire time. As soon as they appeared, they surrounded the hand and unleashed powerful divine abilities.

Master Godwind spoke, his voice hoarse and echoing with killing intent. "You've been surveilling the River-Defying Sect for some time now, haven't you, your excellency!? Did you really think we wouldn't be able to deal with you!?"

The attacks of the three patriarchs caused deafening roars to fill the air. The hand shattered to pieces, and the Violet Core continued downward toward Bruiser. However, at the same time, laughter rang out in the clouds as three beams of light suddenly shot down.

Within those beams of light were indistinct figures, all of whom were moving with lightning speed toward the Violet Core.

“I originally thought some unique treasure had appeared. I can’t believe it’s actually the Violet Core of a beast king!” Bizarre laughter echoed out from within all of the beams of light. However, it was in that moment that the spell formation rumbled, and a huge greatsword appeared that slashed toward the incoming beams of light.

Next, even more patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect appeared. Everyone had assumed that they were in secluded meditation, and yet, just like Master Godwind and the others who had just appeared, that was clearly not the case!

The flying snake’s eyes glittered as it once again shot toward Bruiser.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun understood what was happening. Over the last months, everything in the sect had seemed peaceful, but the truth was that numerous hidden entities had been infiltrating and spying on them. Bruiser’s attempt at Core Formation was a unique situation that was drawing all of them out of hiding.

The patriarchs hadn’t been in secluded meditation at all, and had actually hoped for this to happen.

The patriarchs were willing to take advantage of Bruiser for their

goals, but to Bai Xiaochun, he was too important. Even if the sect was completely prepared for what would happen, he was too anxious to take any risks. Eyes bloodshot, he let out a roar of rage as he shot toward... the Blood Ancestor!

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Chapter 357: Malicious Intentions

Chaotic fighting was unfolding. After the River-Defying Sect's Nascent Soul cultivators appeared, even more shadowy figures emerged to join the struggle.

All of those figures had been concealing their auras to prevent the River-Defying Sect from identifying them. Furthermore, it wasn't just a single group of people; there were four groups!

Even as the fighting broke out, the Blood Ancestor's eyes opened, revealing the maddened gaze of Bai Xiaochun. Bruiser was his son, and as a father, it enraged him to see people bullying him. He simply couldn't stand it that people were trying to steal Bruiser's Violet Core!

"Screw the hell off!!" he roared through the mouth of the Blood Ancestor. Rumbling sounds echoed to the highest heavens as the Blood Ancestor's right hand clenched into a fist and unleashed a fist strike.

That fist strike was powered by the entirety of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base; his Heaven-Dao Gold Core joined with his Undying Heavenly King Core to unleash explosive power. The enormous fist of the Blood Ancestor was like an entire continent rumbling through the air, causing the sky to shatter and sending an enormous shockwave blasting out.

The faces of the infiltrators fell, and they scrambled to get out of the way. Those who were too slow immediately began to cough up

blood.

As for the flying snake, the fist hit it directly, and it screamed as it flew backward.

Suddenly, everything went quiet. Everyone was looking at the enormous Blood Ancestor, shock written across their faces as they tried to determine if it even had any weaknesses.

Master Godwind and Frigidsect exchanged a glance. Originally, they had intended to let the fighting go on a bit longer in the hopes of luring out more infiltrators. However, now that Bai Xiaochun had taken control of the Blood Ancestor, they knew that delaying things could further enrage him. After a moment, they nodded to each other.

“Time to end things,” Frigidsect murmured. “Even those who haven’t showed their faces will be too frightened to make a move after what they’ve seen already!” He waved his hand, and a black sun appeared up in the sky, to be joined moments later by a white sun. The two suns overlapped, as did the two ravens inside the sun. The newly-formed raven then opened its eyes and emitted a deafening cry.

Then... the raven flew out. At the same time, cackling laughter could be heard as a scarecrow stepped out of thin air. The Heavenhorn Sword also appeared, flying toward Frigidsect in a beam of golden light.

Things weren’t over yet. Although the spell formations which

had been set up looked like they were tapped out, they suddenly glittered with brilliant light, and began to shine three times as brightly as before. Three enormous glowing swords appeared, which began to destroy everything in their path.

Heaven and earth shook violently as all of the intruders fled for their lives. Unfortunately, few could get very far. The Heavenhorn Sword slashed one of them in half, and the cackling scarecrow appeared in front of another and began to skin him alive! Moments later, the victim was revealed to be a projection, but the sight of the attacking scarecrow was still bone-chilling!

The light from the black and white suns made it impossible for any of the infiltrators to hide, and the black and white raven proceeded to slaughter them.

However, none of that was very impressive when compared to the three glowing swords created by the spell formations. They quickly broke down into three nets, each one made up of 100,000 swords, which proceeded to slash their enemies to pieces.

The flying snake appeared to be on the verge of escaping, but Li Zimo snorted coldly and chased after it.

From a distance, the River-Defying Sect made for a spectacular sight. It was almost like flowers of swords were blooming above it....

Strangely, many of the people who died didn't shed blood, and as their corpses fell to the ground, they simply vanished. Only a small

group of actual bodies remained.

Clearly, those who didn't leave corpses behind weren't there as their true selves, but had come in clone form. To them, the loss of a clone like that would be somewhat of a waste, but wouldn't truly injure them.

As the clones vanished and the flower of swords began to fade, the Violet Core safely entered Bruiser's mouth. He swallowed it, and almost instantly, his aura began to rise.

Inside the Blood Ancestor, Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen, and he looked completely exhausted. Even with his double cores, it was a draining thing to take control of the Blood Ancestor.

As he looked over at the patriarchs, the animosity in his gaze was apparent.

The patriarchs exchanged awkward glances. The truth was that Bruiser's Core Formation hadn't been part of their long-term plan; they had originally intended to use other methods to draw out the infiltrators. Even still, they were worried that Bai Xiaochun would take things the wrong way, so Frigidsect appeared to offer a complete explanation.

In the end, Bai Xiaochun snorted coldly and made a lot of demands on Bruiser's behalf before agreeing to let the matter drop.

"Those old fogeys...." he grumbled to himself. "They're all wily

old foxes!” Then when he saw how Bruiser’s energy was continuing to rise higher and higher, he got wrapped up in excitement and decided to forgive them for the time being.

Beast kings needed to rest and recuperate after reaching Core Formation, and the patriarchs themselves offered to stand as Dharma protectors for Bruiser during that time. Bai Xiaochun joined them, sitting there cross-legged as he waited for Bruiser to recover completely.

However, waiting around was very boring. Soon he started to think about the baby girl that was the true spirit, and the River-Defying Pill. As the time passed, he became wrapped up in pondering the issue of how to concoct the pill.

“I’m not going to be able to concoct the pill inside of me.... That would only work if I had plenty of life force, which I don’t.... Although concocting it outside of the body is possible, it would be too difficult.” He frowned in consternation.

“Having a drop of blood from the true spirit should make it a bit easier... but I still don’t think I have enough skill in the Dao of medicine to succeed.” Bai Xiaochun felt quite dejected. It was a depressing thing to know what to do, but be unable to do it.

“The simplest thing would be to concoct it within myself.... But I lack life force.... Life force... hey, wait a second!” Suddenly, his eyes sparkled, and he looked down at his bag of holding.

“The little turtle... is the relic of eternal indestructibility. His life

force should be sufficient... shouldn't it?" As Bai Xiaochun considered all these matters, his excitement grew. However, he didn't dare to give voice to his ideas, lest the little turtle catch on.

"The little turtle is too treacherous. I have to think of a way to get him to willingly give me some life force...." He couldn't help but feel a bit of a headache whenever he reminisced about the good old days when the little turtle had been unconscious. Suddenly, his heart thumped.

"Unconscious...." A crafty gleam appeared in his eyes as he suddenly realized that the best thing to do would be to concoct some sort of powerful knockout medicine!

Early in the morning seven days later, Bruiser suddenly opened his eyes and let out a long cry. As he did, violet light exploded out around him, and the fluctuations of Core Formation roiled out.

At the same time, all of the other battle beasts in the River-Defying Sect began to howl. Having accomplished their task of standing as Dharma protectors, the patriarchs left with smiles on their faces.

Bruiser was in high spirits. Although he spent the next few days with Bai Xiaochun, he eventually got bored and ran out to have fun. This time, though, he didn't leave the River-Defying Sect. Instead, he spent his time with the other battle beasts, as well as the female disciples he liked.

Bai Xiaochun let him do as he wished. At the moment, he was

almost completely focused on concocting his knockout medicine. Therefore, he remained in his immortal's cave, mentally reviewing the countless medicine formulas which existed in his mind.

Time passed. Two months flew by.

Bai Xiaochun had come up with a plan, and was making constant improvements to the new medicine formula. On a few occasions, the little turtle popped his head out of the bag of holding to look at Bai Xiaochun. He wasn't a mind-reader, so he had no way to determine what exactly Bai Xiaochun was thinking. However, the crazed look in his eye left the little turtle with a bad feeling.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun didn't give up on cultivation. In addition to mentally pondering the medicine formula, he continued to work with the Undying Muscles and the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation.

One morning at dawn, he finally finished his mental work with the medicine formula. At the same time, he suddenly realized that a jade slip in his bag of holding was vibrating. Upon producing it, he heard Frigidsect's voice speaking in his mind.

"Xiaochun, come to the grand hall on Mount River Defiance. The other three great sects of the Middle Reaches have come for a visit."

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. In recent discussions with the patriarchs, he'd been told that according to the speculations, some of the people who had infiltrated the sect had been rogue

cultivators, but others had come from the three sects.

After all, the River-Defying Sect was a newcomer, and the other three sects were definitely certain to feel them out.

Considering how things had played out, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but snort coldly as he rose to his feet. After donning his junior patriarch robes, he put an icy expression on his face and headed toward the grand hall.

Along the way, he saw other cultivators of the River-Defying Sect looking in the direction of the grand hall, grim expressions on their faces.

Eyes flickering, Bai Xiaochun hurried along until he caught sight of three groups of cultivators, all of whom wore expressions of disdain as they tried to shove away the River-Defying Sect disciples guarding the entrance of the grand hall.

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Chapter 358: Arrogant And Despotic!

Each group had roughly a dozen people in it, including Core Formation and Foundation Establishment cultivators, and they all wore different Daoist robes.

The first group had black robes decorated with images of blood moons, and radiated particularly murderous auras. They had sneers on their faces, and icy gazes filled with killing intent.

Another group wore garments decorated with a starry sky. They were all exceedingly attractive, and the disdain in their sparkling eyes couldn't have been clearer.

The final group dressed in Daoist robes that were black and white. That group contained both male and female cultivators, and radiated a feeling that made them seem as if they had transcended the mortal world. Despite that lofty air, they also looked completely disdainful.

Bai Xiaochun had read introductions regarding the other three sects, and could immediately tell where they were from. The group wearing the starry sky designs were from the Starry River Court. The people with murderous auras were from the devilish Polarity River Court. As for those in the black and white Daoist robes, they were from the most powerful of the sects, the Dao River Court!

The disciples of these three sects were standing directly in front of the grand hall, preventing anyone from entering. They were the guests, but they were acting like the hosts! They were even driving

away the River-Defying Sect disciples who had been assigned to guard duty.

Directly up above in the sky, an enormous, pitch-black lizard could be seen, and when it deigned to look down, its gaze was as cold as ice. It even seemed like it wished to eat the River-Defying Sect disciples.

Some distance away from the lizard was an enormous battleship, fully 3,000 meters long, and completely silver in color. It reflected the sunlight in dazzling fashion, and pulsed with terrifying power.

In another direction was a gigantic meteor, fully 3,000 meters across and surrounded by a scorching sea of flames. The heat radiating from the meteor was such that many plants and trees down below began to wither up.

Even as Bai Xiaochun approached, a middle-aged cultivator from the Starry River Court shoved one of the Foundation Establishment disciples of the River-Defying Sect, causing him to stagger backward thirty meters.

“Back off,” said the Starry River Court cultivator. “Nobody is allowed in here!” Sneering, he turned and started chatting with his fellow sect disciples. “This really is a puny sect. I can’t believe they have trash like this guarding the grand hall.”

His comrades sneered, and the disciples of the other two sects looked even more disdainful than before.

The River-Defying Sect disciples were furious, but managed to hold their tempers. They well knew that the River-Defying Sect had only just entered the Middle Reaches, and didn't have a very stable position. Considering that the other three sects had only just arrived for their formal visit, and the patriarchs were all in the grand hall having a meeting, any conflicts which broke out could have very negative ramifications.

On the other hand, it was obvious that the disciples from the other sects were trying to provoke a conflict....

However, when they realized that the River-Defying Sect disciples weren't taking the bait, their faces turned even more grim. Despite that, none of them made any openly aggressive moves. As the disciples of the three sects exchanged hesitant glances, the leaders among each group began to talk loudly.

"I heard there are a lot of self-proclaimed Chosen in the River-Defying Sect. Where's Bai Xiaochun? How about Song Que, Ghostfang, Nine-Isles, Shangguan Tianyou, and Chen Manyao? Where are they?"

"The Nascent Soul Daoist masters are having a meeting in the grand hall, and we Juniors are stuck out here, bored out of our minds. Why don't the River-Defying Sect Chosen come out to show their stuff?"

The other disciples in the three groups knew what their leaders wanted them to do.

A young man stepped out of the crowd from the Polarity River Court, and each step he took caused cracking sounds to fill the air; clearly, he had incredible fleshly body power. Looking around, he laughed loudly and then said, “Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Di Gong, and I’m in late Foundation Establishment. Fellow Daoists from the River-Defying Sect, please step forward and give me some cultivation tips!”

He wasn’t the only one to walk out into the open. Cultivators emerged from the other two sects as well, to make similar taunts.

“Seriously?” one of them said. “Nobody from the majestic River-Defying Sect will dare to swap pointers with me? What kind of a sect is this?!”

The River-Defying Sect disciples were panting in anger. A moment later, one of the late Foundation Establishment disciples from the Profound Stream Division charged toward Di Gong.

Two more disciples began to charge toward the cultivators from the other two sects.

“Get your ass back in line!” Di Gong said, laughing. Planting his right foot down onto the ground, he kicked off, spinning his leg through the air. Unexpectedly, though, this wasn’t a kick powered by his fleshly body; a vast quantity of wind blades appeared, which shot forward in a dangerous magical attack!

The Profound Stream Division disciple unleashed a flying sword, but to his surprise, the sword passed directly through Di Gong. By

the time he realized that what he was looking at was an afterimage, it was too late, and Di Gong was right in front of him. Before he could react, Di Gong unleashed a fist strike which smashed right into him.

Di Gong wasn't done yet, though. Laughing with vicious killing intent, he prepared to unleash another attack on the same disciple. The surrounding disciples of the River-Defying Sect were enraged, and a few of them flew over to try to save their fellow disciple.

Meanwhile, the other two disciples who had flown out to challenge the visiting sects were being beaten back. Furthermore, their opponents seemed to be in the same killing mood as Di Gong.

When Bai Xiaochun saw these events playing out, rage flickered in his eyes. In a flash, he appeared in front of the Profound Stream Division disciple, where he stood in place. When Di Gong's fist slammed into him, it didn't even move a hair on his head. The force of Di Gong's blow was redirected back at him, causing blood to spray out of his mouth as he tumbled backward, a look of shock on his face.

“A Core Formation cultivator?!” Di Gong bellowed. “How shameless, River-Defying Sect! You dare to have a Core Formation cultivator fight the Foundation Establishment stage?!?”

Even as his words were echoing out, Bai Xiaochun blurred into motion again, becoming a series of afterimages as he sped forward to rescue the other two disciples. He did the same thing, using his body to block the attacks being sent against them. He wasn't hurt at all, whereas the attackers from the other two sects were sent

tumbling backward, coughing up blood and shouting out in rage.

“Completely shameless!!”

“How dare a Core Formation cultivator ambush a Foundation Establishment disciple!”

Di Gong and the other two disciples were completely enraged as they stared at Bai Xiaochun with cold gazes.

Bai Xiaochun blurred into motion again, ending up in front of the cultivators of the three sects, hands clasped behind his back and chin stuck up. Glaring at them, he said, “So what if I attacked some Foundation Establishment cultivators? I’ve attacked Qi Condensation disciples in the past too. Is that shameless? Besides, did you actually see me do any attacking? You were obviously hitting me! Seems to me like you’re the shameless ones! Three Foundation Establishment cultivators actually had the gall to gang up on me, a Core Formation expert!! You people are going way overboard, you bullies. Don’t push me too far. When I get mad, I frighten even myself!”

The cultivators of the three sects stared back at him angrily, thinking back to try to remember if he really had made an attack or not....

Meanwhile, the disciples of the River-Defying Sect were more excited than ever, and began to call out greetings.

“Junior Patriarch!!”

“Greetings, Junior Patriarch!!”

“Greetings, Junior Patriarch!!!”

The leaders of the groups from the other sects instantly realized who was standing in front of them, and their pupils constricted.

At this point, a young man strode out from the Starry River Court, his eyes flickering with cold light. Hidden in his hand was a black spike; in his estimation, if he could cripple Bai Xiaochun here, there might be some negative consequences, but overall, it would be a big win. “How amusing,” he said. “So, you’re Bai Xiaochun, huh? Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Chen Yunshan. Why don’t we swap pointers about–”

Even as he began to speak, Core Formation cultivators stepped out from among the disciples from the Polarity River Court and the Dao River Court, their eyes shining with cold light.

However, before Chen Yunshan could finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun yelled, “You’re forcing me to do this!”

With that, he threw a medicinal pill toward Chen Yunshan.

“Huh?” Chen Yunshan said, jaw dropping. He waved his sleeve, but it didn’t prevent the medicinal pill from exploding, causing black smoke to swirl out. His fellow disciples were also shocked,

and waved their sleeves to disperse the smoke. However, there was some strange property to the smoke that made it impossible to dispel, and it even began to seep into them through their skin.

Of course, as soon as the medicinal pill appeared, strange expressions appeared on the faces of the surrounding disciples of the River-Defying Sect. That was especially true of the disciples from the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions. They immediately began to back up, dragging the disciples of the other two divisions with them. Within moments, they were more than 300 meters away.

The cultivators of the Dao River Court and Polarity River Court were shocked, and couldn't figure out why Bai Xiaochun had just thrown out a medicinal pill. Furthermore, the reactions of the River-Defying Sect were very telling, and they subconsciously began to back up as well.

“What are you doing, Bai Xiaochun?!” Chen Yunshan yelled angrily. Just when he was about to take a step forward, his eyes suddenly twitched. Simultaneously, one of his comrades behind him suddenly howled, lunged forward, and hugged him from behind!

“Junior Sister Li,” he cried, “I’ve finally found you!!”

Within the blink of an eye, the dozen or so cultivators from the Starry River Court began to go crazy. One of the affected cultivators spread his arms wide and began to run back and forth. Another of them began to rave madly. Another suddenly began to smile broadly. Only the Core Formation disciple was able to stave

off the effects with great effort.

“I’m flying! Fly, fly away....”

“What is this place? Everybody get back! AIIIEEEE....”

“Hahaha! I’ve finally reached the Deva Realm! From now on, I’m unparalleled under heaven!!”

Some of the affected disciples wore looks of terror on their faces, and began to scream at the tops of their lungs. There was one who suddenly seemed drunk with pleasure, and immediately flew up into the sky toward the huge lizard.

“Hey baby,” he said. “Don’t be scared, I’m coming....”

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Chapter 359: Bullying Others With Force!

Hissed expressions of shock and surprise could be heard outside the grand hall. As for the disciples of the River-Defying Sect, they were looking at Bai Xiaochun as if he were some sort of god.

That was especially true of the disciples from the Blood Stream Division, many of whom literally shed tears as they thought back to situations they had encountered in the past.

The disciples from the Spirit Stream Division felt similarly sympathetic. As for the Profound Stream Division, many of them had faced Bai Xiaochun and his team on the battlefield, and had been similarly tormented....

Then there was the Pill Stream Division disciples, whose eyes shone with bright light. They had heard many stories of Bai Xiaochun's pill concocting, which by this point were virtually legends. To see such things occurring with their own eyes filled their hearts with passion.

Off to the side, the disciples of the Polarity River Court and the Dao River Court looked profoundly alarmed. Not only were they crying out in shock, they were rushing backward at top speed, doing anything they could to avoid contact with the black strands of smoke.

“W-what’s... what’s going on!?!?”

“Heavens! What kind of pill is that!? It’s absolutely terrifying!!”

“I can’t believe a medicinal pill like that exists in the world! Look, even the Core Formation cultivator can’t hold out any longer! That medicinal pill is horrifying!!”

The disciples of the two sects looked over at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of unprecedented fear, especially the female disciples. The more they thought about the ramifications of what they were seeing, the more frightening it was! Regardless of the levels of their cultivation bases, all of them felt profound terror of Bai Xiaochun rising up inside of them.

Bai Xiaochun coughed dryly and then shrugged his shoulders at the cultivators of the Polarity River Court and Dao River Court.

“You see?” he said, sounding very wronged. “They forced my hand. Like I said, when I get angry, I frighten even myself. But they didn’t listen, did they? They insisted on bullying me!” Suddenly, he cocked his head to the side, as if he’d just remembered something. Looking at the Core Formation cultivators from the other two sects, he said, “Oh right, you two were about to say something, weren’t you?”

The cultivators of both sects were trembling, and the Foundation Establishment disciples edged backward again, trying to put some distance between themselves and the Core Formation elders. As for those elders, their hearts were starting to pound. Glancing over at the tragic scene playing out, the quickly offered explanations.

“Oh no, I wasn’t going to say much. Just that you really live up to

your reputation, Fellow Daoist Bai. You're like a dragon among men!"

"Yeah, exactly! Your sect is definitely going to be very popular in the Middle Reaches!"

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily in response. Looking very pleased with himself, he was just about to boast a little bit more when suddenly, a cold snort echoed out thunderously from inside the grand hall. Everything trembled as a figure sped out of the hall, an old man with a full head of fiery red hair, and eyes that sparkled like lightning.

Instantly, the maddened disciples shivered, and then began to vomit. After a moment passed, their pale faces once again filled with color. They were clearly weakened, and when they looked over at Bai Xiaochun, their gazes were filled with both confusion and terror.

That was especially true of Chen Yunshan, who was glaring murderously at Bai Xiaochun. In his heart, he had already vowed to kill Bai Xiaochun in the future, to settle the score for the humiliation he had just experienced.

After rescuing the maddened disciples, the red-haired old man turned his gaze upon Bai Xiaochun. Of course, considering that the man was vastly above Bai Xiaochun in both terms of cultivation base and status, it wasn't appropriate to meet his gaze. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun simply looked down innocently and kicked at a nearby pebble.

The red-haired old man gave a cold harrumph, then stalked grim-faced back into the grand hall.

Bai Xiaochun immediately looked back up and glared in the old man's direction. Then he glanced around at the other disciples around him, and tried to decide whether or not to enter the hall himself.

That was when Frigidsect's voice echoed out. "Xiaochun, stop causing trouble outside. Come in."

Sticking his chest out proudly, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and walked somberly toward the entrance to the hall. The disciples of the three sects looked at him with mixed emotions in their eyes. Furthermore, none of them were in any mood to harass the River-Defying Sect any more.

Upon entering the grand hall, Bai Xiaochun heard the voice of the red-haired old man he'd just seen.

"The River-Defying Sect is not the Sky River Court. It doesn't make any sense at all for the River-Defying Sect to get the Sky River Court's shares for no reason!"

Bai Xiaochun scanned the hall, and saw Frigidsect, Master Godwind, and Patriarch Crimson soul sitting in the position of honor, grim expressions on their faces. Seated in two rows in front of them, on the left and right, were eight other cultivators.

Without a single exception, all of those cultivators had Nascent Soul cultivation bases, and profound ones at that. Terrifying fluctuations spread out from them in all directions.

“That’s right,” one of them said. “Resources are limited, and we all have sects to sustain. Obviously, the strong get stronger and the weak get weaker. You can’t blame anyone but yourselves for that.”

Although the Nascent Soul cultivators of the three sects noticed Bai Xiaochun enter the hall, none of them paid him much attention, with the exception of the red-haired old man, whose eyes glittered with brutal ferocity.

Bai Xiaochun pretended not to notice, striding somberly over to stand next to Frigidsect.

Frigidsect gritted his teeth. Voice rigid with anger, he said, “The River-Defying Sect took over the Sky River Court, and that includes the Sky River Court’s shares!”

“Brother Frigidsect,” said another of the Nascent Soul cultivators, “these are simply the rules governing the Middle Reaches cultivation world. It’s not like we’re specifically targeting the River-Defying Sect.”

As Bai Xiaochun listened to the Nascent Soul cultivators’ discussion, he gradually came to understand why the three other sects had come to visit.

There was an arcane pocket realm in the Middle Reaches that opened once every sixty-year-cycle, within which were copious amounts of spirit plants. Some were the type that only appeared once every ten thousand years, others were virtually extinct in the outside world. Furthermore, there were a few that were critical ingredients to concocting Deva Pills, which could give Nascent Soul cultivators a much better chance to advance to the mortal-tier Deva Realm. The value of such pills to virtually any sect couldn't be put into words.

Every time the spirit plants in the arcane pocket realm were harvested, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would take roughly half of the crop, and divide the rest among the four great sects.

The entrance to that arcane pocket realm was located in a sealed legacy zone, an area that had been constructed ages ago by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect itself. By sealing the entrance to the pocket realm within a legacy zone, it not only kept the spirit plants safe, is also provided a chance for disciples of the four sects to earn magical techniques and divine abilities from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. That was also a way for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to scout for possible new disciples.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had long since established rules governing how to split up the harvest from the pocket realm. Before the opening of the realm, the four sects would send disciples into the legacy zone to acquire legacy seals. Only one hundred such seals were available, and the number acquired by the disciples would determine how many resources their sect got when the shares were divided.

It was now only a few dozen years before the arcane pocket realm was to be opened again. Last time, the Sky River Court had taken second place in terms of shares, earning thirty percent of the resources, all of which still remained in the treasure storehouses, untouched. Those resources were extremely important to the Nascent Soul patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect, who could make use of them in their attempts to reach the Deva Realm.

But now, the three sects had come to redistribute the shares from the previous harvest, and wanted the River-Defying Sect to hand over the resources, and even make up for any that were missing!

The red-haired old man from the Starry River Court looked at Frigidsect and then spoke in a harsh tone. “Those resources belonged to the Sky River Court, not the River-Defying Sect. If you want resources like that, you’re going to have to work for them yourself!”

Bai Xiaochun frowned as his train of thought was interrupted, and his attention was drawn to the Nascent Soul cultivators from the three sects. Based on what he understood, the Dao River Court was the strongest of the sects, and had taken first place last time. To them, this wasn’t a very big issue, and as such, they weren’t saying much in the discussion.

The Polarity River Court had come in third, and also had little to say. From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, the Starry River Court had come in last, and had the greatest motivation to push the issue.

They weren't willing to back down, and it was primarily them who were trying to intimidate the River-Defying Sect. In fact, it was entirely likely that they had made offers of compensation to the other two sects to make this meeting happen.

Essentially, they wanted to take advantage of the River-Defying Sect's weakness to steal their resources!

Frigidsect and the other patriarchs were doing their best to suppress their fury. Just when the red-haired old man was about to say something more, a white-robed old man from the Dao River Court, who had been dozing the entire time, suddenly opened his eyes and said, "Enough. The matter is settled. We've already been in contact with the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, who have come up with a method to resolve the issue. Although the legacy zone is usually only opened once every sixty-year-cycle, this time, we are being allowed to open it outside of the normal schedule! We'll send our disciples in to take the trial by fire, and use the results to determine how the shares are redistributed. What do you think, Fellow Daoist Frigidsect?"

Frigidsect maintained his silence for a moment, then took a deep breath. He well knew that he wasn't in a position to disagree. If he did, it could have serious negative ramifications in the future. Furthermore, considering the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had already given their stamp of approval, the River-Defying Sect had no qualifications to disagree.

"Deva Realm...." he thought. "If only the River-Defying Sect had someone in the Deva Realm, then things wouldn't play out like this!" Finally, he gritted his teeth and nodded.

Smiling, the white-robed old man rose to his feet. “Excellent. In that case, I won’t disturb you any further. See you in a month at the arcane pocket realm!” With that, he walked out of the hall. The Nascent Soul Daoist masters from the Polarity River Court had icy smiles on their faces as they also left.

Last was the red-haired old man from the Starry River Court. Just before walking out of the hall, he looked back at Frigidsect and said, “Oh, one more thing. I forgot to mention the requirement to enter the legacy zone. The only people who qualify are Core Formation cultivators who reached the stage within one sixty-year-cycle.”

In response, the faces of Frigidsect and the other patriarchs turned even more grim.

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Chapter 360: Fine. Fine. Fine! I'll go!

When he saw the reactions of Frigidsect, Master Godwind, and Patriarch Crimson soul, the red-haired old man chuckled disdainfully, then flicked his sleeve and walked out.

Rumbling could be heard outside of the grand hall as the cultivators of the three sects boarded their magical flight devices and then shot off into the distance, leaving behind nothing more than billowing winds and swirling dust.

“Dammit!” Crimson soul said through gritted teeth.

Master Godwind frowned. “I guess this is our fault for not understanding the rules of the Middle Reaches cultivation world....”

Frigidsect smiled wryly and said, “With the plentiful resources here in the Middle Reaches, it’s not as difficult for cultivators to reach Core Formation within a sixty-year-cycle. In the Lower Reaches, such an accomplishment is very, very difficult....”

At that point, he suddenly seemed to remember something, and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

Moments later, Master Godwind and Crimson soul were also looking at him.

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit unnerved to be stared at by these three,

and couldn't help but subconsciously take a few steps back.

“Um... Patriarchs, I–”

“Xiaochun, the reason we were just bullied and humiliated right now is because our sect is too weak!”

“That's right, Xiaochun. Now that I think about it, there's only one person in the entire River-Defying Sect who reached Core Formation within a sixty-year-cycle....”

“Nightcrypt, my boy, as the junior patriarch, surely you understand how important this matter is to the future development of the sect!”

Although the words spoken by the three patriarchs were all different, as were the expressions on their faces, the gleams in their eyes were exactly the same.

“I....” Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt as if his throat were bone dry. Moments ago, he had been standing there listening quietly, feeling much the same anger as the patriarchs. But then the three old fogeys suddenly turned to stare at him, and even worse, when they began to talk, their words caused his heart to tremble.

Inwardly, he was crying out in grief, especially when he thought about the fact that he really was the only Core Formation cultivator in the sect who had reached that stage within a sixty-year-cycle. When it came to legacy zones, sects would usually send

seven or eight people, but in this case, he would be going in alone.

The mere idea struck Bai Xiaochun with fear, and it was even worse considering that he had just aggressively heaped bad fortune onto the disciples from the Starry River Court, and had also brazenly threatened the Polarity River Court and the Dao River Court.

At this point, his expression suddenly turned somber. A bitter look appeared in his eyes as he continued, “Listen, Patriarchs, the truth is that I actually lied about my age before. Um yeah....

“Now that I’m the junior patriarch, I can’t continue to hide the truth. Back when I was found on that mountain, I wasn’t a teenager, I was actually forty!

“I just looked young, and decided to perpetuate the lie. I was wrong, I know. I should have told you the truth, and not caused such confusion for the sect during important times!”

Bai Xiaochun’s voice was filled with regret, and he truly sounded as if he were divulging a long-harbored secret. As he spoke, his hands slowly clenched into fists.

“Patriarchs, I truly feel terrible. Every time I think about my true age, and how I’ve hidden it for so long, I feel worse and worse. Alright, well I guess it’s time to go into secluded meditation now....” Even as he spoke, he turned and hurried toward the door.

Crimsonsoul was frowning, and Master Godwind looked quite anxious. Just as they were about to speak, Frigidsect smiled wryly and said, “Xiaochun, you’re going, whether you want to or not.”

However, Bai Xiaochun didn’t stop heading toward the door.

“Nobody wants our sect to seem weak, right?” Frigidsect continued. “If we can’t produce a single Core Formation cultivator who succeeded within one sixty-year-cycle, it will only mean further humiliation at the hands of the three other sects. I’m afraid if that happens, we won’t have a very strong foundation in the Middle Reaches.”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he slowed down a bit, his heart twisting with indecision.

Frigidsect seemed to be getting a bit worked up as he went on, “But that’s okay. You’re the most important of all, Xiaochun. The sect is your home, and we’re your family. We won’t force you to do anything you don’t want to do. Even if we get bullied and humiliated, we’ll protect you, and all the other disciples too!”

Bai Xiaochun was at the door, looking out at the world outside, indecision gripping his heart and refusing to let go.

“This time,” Frigidsect said, “the River-Defying Sect will just have to concede defeat. Master Godwind, Crimsonsoul, there’s no need to send me secret messages with divine sense. I’ve already made my decision!” Frigidsect suddenly seemed older, his voice laced with bleakness and exhaustion.

Bai Xiaochun stood there looking up sadly into the sky.

“What?” Frigidsect said loudly. “What’s that you say via projected message, Master Godwind? No. Although we know going in that we will lose, and only want to do it to keep from losing face, we can’t send Bai Xiaochun in alone! Yes, I know. Bai Xiaochun once said in his heart that he lives for the sect. Yes, I know we treat him well. I know all that. But you might as well give up trying to persuade me!

“Crimsonsoul, stop projecting messages. My mind has been made up. It doesn’t matter that Xiaochun has precious treasures to defend himself with, as well as a Heaven-Dao Gold Core. It doesn’t matter that he has cultivated an incredibly powerful fleshly body, and that it would be virtually impossible for anyone under Nascent Soul to kill him. Nor does it matter that, by the Dharmic decree of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, killing is forbidden in the legacy seal competition. Bai Xiaochun is our junior patriarch! Even if the place offers no dangers whatsoever, we definitely can’t take any risks at all!”

Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and turned to face the three patriarchs, looking almost like he was about to cry. “Fine. I’ll go, alright? Enough with the persuading....”

The instant the words left Bai Xiaochun’s mouth, Frigidsect rose to his feet, walked over to him, and clasped him enthusiastically on the shoulder.

“Good kid! Alright, the matter’s set!

“This jade slip will tell you everything you need to know about the legacy zone. Study it carefully....

“Make whatever preparations you need to. In a month, the three of us will personally escort you to the legacy zone!” With that, he turned and sped away.

Master Godwind and Crimson soul gave approving glances to Bai Xiaochun, but fearing that he might suddenly change his mind, they quickly teleported away....

Bai Xiaochun looked around with wide eyes at the empty hall. He reached his hands out as if he wanted to grab onto something, but the only thing he had to grab onto was his hair.

“Those crafty foxes!” he wailed. “Schemers, all of them! There’s no way they didn’t know about the rules. Obviously, they knew from the beginning, and were just trying to con me. I... I” Scowling, Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt as if he was very, very naïve. After walking dejectedly out of the hall, he looked up into the sky, and it somehow seemed very, very dark.

He moped all the way back to his immortal’s cave, where he sat down cross-legged in grief. Then he thought about how he would have to single-handedly go up against people from all three of the other sects, and he suddenly felt quite lonely.

“Wait, it won’t be just me. I can take Bruiser with me! He reached Core Formation in less than a sixty-year-cycle! The two of us against all those people....

“How will we handle it? They’re definitely going to bully us! What do I do...?” Hanging his head dispiritedly, he took out the jade slip and started to go over the information about the legacy zone.

According to the detailed description in the jade slip, there were a total of 100 legacy seals inside. Last time, the Sky River Court sent 13 qualified disciples into the legacy zone, who managed to acquire 30 seals. Unfortunately, none of them managed to acquire enlightenment of any of the legacy techniques.

In the end, the Sky River Court got thirty percent of the resources, whereas the Starry River Court, who came in last place, only got ten percent.

The rules for how to distribute the resources were set down by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and couldn’t be changed.

Bai Xiaochun sighed again. For the following several days, he continued to mull over the matter until he made his final decision.

“Fudge! I already said I’d go, right? Fine. Fine. Fine! I’ll go!!” After he thought about how many other people he would be competing against, he decided to go buy a huge amount of paper talismans.

He didn't purchase them with merit points, but rather, got them on credit. Next, he went to the Treasure Pavilion, where he did the same thing to acquire a large collection of magical items.

Finally, he purchased some armor and more leather clothing. Realizing that the only thing he lacked was a big black wok, he searched the sect up and down until he found an extraordinarily sturdy iron wok that was more than suitable.

Next, he gritted his teeth and requested some multi-colored fuel from the patriarchs, which he used to perform fivefold spirit enhancements on all of his items, including the big black wok.

Despite how many items he had purchased, he still didn't feel safe. Next, he went to the Profound Stream Division to request some spell formations, then to the Blood Stream Division to request spirit blood, and finally to the Pill Stream Division to request spirit medicines.

By the time he was finished with all these activities, half a month had passed. For the next half month, he focused on cultivation, and ended up inching closer toward a breakthrough.

As for his work with his Undying Muscles, the big toe on his left foot was finished. Whenever he called upon it, shocking fleshly body power would surge through him, originating from the toe.

Unfortunately, using that power would also cause his shoe to explode.

Because of that, Bai Xiaochun also prepared a large number of shoes for his left foot.

Eventually, the long-awaited day came. At dawn, Bai Xiaochun walked out of his immortal's cave, wearing numerous layers of leather clothing, and a black wok strapped to his back. He had paper talismans plastered all over him, and overall, looked very sad.

Then he headed toward the summit of Mount River Defiance, followed by the curious Bruiser, who was wearing a suit of armor and plenty of paper talismans, and yet radiated an air of complete ferocity.

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Chapter 361: Only One?

Many disciples emerged to watch Bai Xiaochun go up to Mount River Defiance. Everyone knew why the other three Middle Reaches sects had come last month, and it left them simmering with rage. They also knew that Bai Xiaochun was going to represent the River-Defying Sect in a fight inside an arcane pocket realm!

When news spread that the only person in the entire sect who qualified to go was Bai Xiaochun, many cultivators started to get worried.

The River-Defying Sect was a newcomer to the Middle Reaches, as unfamiliar with the cultivation world there as they were strangers to it.

In these unfamiliar surroundings, the River-Defying Sect seemed impressive, but the truth was that until they produced a Deva Realm expert, they were in a very precarious position, and could be easily supplanted.

A feeling of uneasiness and lurking danger existed in the hearts of not only the ordinary disciples, but even the patriarchs. Thankfully, they had the Blood Ancestor and the Dire Skybanyan, as well as the shocking true spirit which made even the other three great sects nervous.

Those were the only things that gave the River-Defying Sect a modicum of stability.

Bai Xiaochun was aware of all of that. Therefore, despite the fact that he didn't really want to go to the arcane pocket realm, and despite the ferocity he had witnessed among the disciples of the three sects, he had chosen to go along with the arrangement. Gritting his teeth and trembling with fear, he led Bruiser slowly up to the top of the mountain.

Waiting there for him were Master Godwind, Frigidsect, and Crimson soul. Three late Nascent Soul Daoist masters would be escorting him to the arcane pocket realm.

Everyone watched silently as Bai Xiaochun made his way to the top of the mountain. Ghostfang emerged from his immortal's cave, an absent-minded look in his eyes as he thought back to the time he had fought Bai Xiaochun back in the Spirit Stream Sect.

That was the first time he had ever lost to someone in the same generation as him, and although he hadn't appeared to have been affected in any way, it had awoken in him a strong desire to surpass Bai Xiaochun.

At a certain point, though, he had come to realize that Bai Xiaochun's progress was almost unbelievable. He was already so far ahead that it almost seemed impossible to catch up.

Then there was Song Que, who stood atop one of the mountains in the Blood Stream Division, hands clenched tightly into fists. He was thinking about the Fallen Sword World, Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, and everything which had occurred

after that. Within his eyes burned flames of defiance!

“I’m definitely going to surpass you one day!”

As for the blood masters and other top Chosen in the Blood Stream Division, all of them were equally unsettled. While they were concerned about their sect, they also couldn’t help but compare themselves to Bai Xiaochun. The fact that none of them even qualified to go into the arcane pocket realm was profoundly chafing to all of them.

Zhou Xinqi was having a hard time controlling her breathing, and Nine-Isles’ eyes were completely bloodshot. Master God-Diviner and Jia Lie were both unsettled. In the past, there had been one dazzling Chosen who was currently stuck at a cultivation base bottleneck. That was Lu Tianlei, who spent most of his time alone, refusing to go out. However, as of this moment, he chose to emerge from his immortal’s cave and stare off at the figure ascending Mount River Defiance.

Chen Manyao appeared, as did Gongsun Wan’er. Gongsun Wan’er’s expression was the same as ever, her lips perpetually upturned into a faint smile. However, compared to all the people just mentioned, the person with the most complicated emotions of all was teetering on the verge of madness: Shangguan Tianyou!

He stood tall and straight, his features as stunningly handsome as ever. He had no desire to even look at Bai Xiaochun, and therefore refused to emerge from his immortal’s cave. Although he couldn’t see Bai Xiaochun, his heart felt as if it had been bitten by the most poisonous of serpents, and the pain he felt was difficult to put into

words.

Eyes bloodshot and fists clenched, he said, “You’re just a cheap bastard with no parents and no education. I’m Shangguan Tianyou! I’m definitely going to crush you beneath my feet!”

Although there were people who were jealous or angry, there were others who were sending Bai Xiaochun away with blessings and well wishes. Big Fatty Zhang, Hou Yunfei, Xu Baocai, Third Fatty Hei, and Li Qinghou were all present. Hou Xiaomei and Song Junwan were there too, wishing him well, but at the same time, very nervous.

Countless eyes were fixed upon Bai Xiaochun as he ascended the mountain. Soon, he was at the very same altar where Bruiser had reached Core Formation.

That was where the three patriarchs were waiting for him. As soon they looked over and saw his getup, their jaws dropped, and they exchanged awkward glances. Finally, Frigidsect coughed dryly and then waved his hand.

Instantly, a silver beam of light descended from the sky above. It was the Heavenhorn Sword, which began to grow larger and larger until it was fully 3,000 meters long!

“Alright, Xiaochun, it’s time to leave!” he said. With that, he blurred into motion, shooting toward the Heavenhorn Sword. Crimson soul and Master Godwind joined him, and within moments, they were on top of the sword, where they sat down

cross-legged in a row. Bai Xiaochun gritted his teeth and flew up to join them. Behind him, Bruiser threw his head back and roared as he followed along.

Bruiser's eyes were filled with excitement and anticipation. This was his first time being allowed to go out with Bai Xiaochun for a trial by fire, and being alongside him for such an event was extremely exciting.

“Let's go!” Frigidsect said, his voice booming like thunder. The Heavenhorn Sword began to shine with dazzling silver light, and then rumbling echoed out as it shot off with incredible speed. In the blink of an eye, it had disappeared, leaving behind nothing but rolling sonic booms and a long streak of silver light.

Only after Bai Xiaochun left did people begin to speak again in the River-Defying Sect. Nine-Isles, Song Que, Ghostfang, and the other Chosen like them all went back into secluded meditation, their eyes filled with the determination to advance. All of them swore to reach Core Formation as quickly as possible.

Even Big Fatty Zhang gritted his teeth and went into secluded meditation.

Virtually everyone in the same generation as Bai Xiaochun did the same thing.

The cultivation world of the Middle Reaches was so large that it couldn't really be described as being divided into continents. Instead, the word 'domain' was used. As for the realm occupied by the River-Defying Sect, its name had recently been changed from the Sky Domain to the Defiance Domain.

As for the arcane pocket realm, it was located far away from the Defiance Domain in the Dao Domain, next to a seemingly endless desert. Because the desert was so far away from the Heavenspan River, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth was rather faint there.

It was in that region of scarce spiritual energy that the arcane pocket realm existed, and despite its remoteness, it couldn't be judged as a place devoid of good fortune.

There was a temple in that desert, a place of extreme ancientness that had existed longer than anyone could remember. This was the location where the legacy seals existed, and also the entrance to the arcane pocket realm!

Surrounding the temple were more than a hundred stones sticking up out of the desert sands, each one well over 300 meters tall.

The stones were very strange-looking, and at first glance seemed to have been distributed randomly around the temple. However, closer examination would reveal that they had been placed in a specific pattern which altered the state of heaven and earth in the area. Shockingly, those stones were a powerful spell formation!

Powerful fluctuations rolled out from the spell formation that even Nascent Soul cultivators would be leery of. Clearly, the only person who could have possibly put such a spell formation into place was a deva!

The forces of the Starry River Court and the Polarity River Court could already be seen sitting cross-legged in meditation atop the stones. Each of the two sects had more than twenty cultivators who had yet to live for a full sixty-year-cycle. There were men and women, all of them with calm expressions. However, there was no hiding the aloof pride in their eyes; they were all top Chosen in their sects.

The truth was that they had a right to be proud. A mere glance at any one of them would reveal how different they were from ordinary cultivators.

The two sects had spent vast amounts of resources to raise these Chosen, who were seeds that would grow to be pillars of their respective organizations. One of them was Chen Yunshan.

The two sects were seated apart from each other, and their auras were clearly different. As for the Starry River Court, their cultivators were surrounded by a murky radiance that almost seemed like countless stars, pulsing with a profound aura.

In sharp contrast to them were the Chosen of the Polarity River Court. They had fiendish, murderous auras, and gazes which seemed capable of penetrating into their opponent's hearts and

minds. They seemed like people who killed at the drop of a hat, and were surrounded by a seething black mist. It was just barely possible to see the outlines of devilish spirits within that mist, roving to and fro.

The energy on display here was something the likes of which no sect in the Lower Reaches cultivation world could ever have. Only the great sects of the Middle Reaches could put on a display like this!

As the forces of the two sects sat there waiting, the cultivators began to look up into the sky as they sensed certain fluctuations off in the distance.

A moment later, a streak of silver light appeared off in the distance, which was the Heavenhorn Sword. As it pierced through the air, the power of a tenfold spirit enhancement rippled out in all directions. Clearly, the River-Defying Sect was trying to put on a good show. In the blink of an eye, the sword was closing in on the spell formation, allowing the cultivators of the Starry and Polarity River Courts to see the figures atop it.

Ignoring the three patriarchs, their gazes came to rest on Bai Xiaochun.

It was hard to say who among the two sects said it, but the surprise and derision in that person's voice couldn't have been more clear. "Only one person?!"

Chapter 362: The Legacy Competition Begins!

Everyone in the two sects began to snicker. Then, they simply looked away from the Heavenhorn Sword, their hearts filled with disdain.

Everyone knew that they were gathered to fight for a share of soon-to-be-redistributed resources. Because of that, the number of people who participated was crucial. If the River-Defying Sect could only produce one person who qualified, then there was no suspense in the matter. The River-Defying Sect... would be lucky to get one percent of the resources in the end.

The Starry River Court cultivators were especially aware of why this redistribution of resources was happening. Not only were they very complacent, they simply couldn't hide their disdain for the River-Defying Sect.

Chen Yunshan was the only one present whose eyes flickered with killing intent; he already hated Bai Xiaochun down to his guts. Not only had the events of the previous month plagued his nightmares afterwards, he had been punished by the sect, and had become a laughingstock among his contemporaries. Because of that, his rancor continued to fester day by day.

Glaring at Bai Xiaochun, he thought, "It's too bad we're not allowed to kill anyone in here, otherwise you'd be dead!"

As for the people from the Polarity River Court, they weren't

interested at all in the River-Defying Sect. To them, this was merely a mission to accomplish for the sect. Everyone here was to be rewarded, and they couldn't help but feel some disdain for the River-Defying Sect, who had only brought one person.

Rumbling sounds filled the air as the Heavenhorn Sword shot down from the sky. After coming to a stop some distance above the ground, the three patriarchs led Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser off of the sword and down to the ground.

Bai Xiaochun was panting, and his eyes were wide as he took in the crowd of cultivators from the two sects. He almost couldn't believe that all of them were in the Core Formation stage. Each and every one was clearly an outstanding individual, and Bai Xiaochun's heart was already starting to fill with an intense sensation of danger because of it.

"How... how could there be so many of them...?" he thought, a miserable expression on his face. The mere idea of having to compete with more than forty other top experts to get the legacy seals seemed almost too much for him to take.

The three patriarchs were also frowning as they looked over the forces from the Starry and Polarity River Courts. As for the Nascent Soul cultivators leading the two groups, they merely looked over and gave faint smiles. Clearly, they weren't interested in chatting.

Compared to these two sects, the River-Defying Sect looked quite weak.

“So,” Chen Yunshan said all of a sudden, “it turns out the River-Defying Sect doesn’t just have one person. They have a beast, too. I guess that brings their total to one and a half.” He started laughing, and was soon joined by others from his sect.

Another cultivator called out, “I think it’s a bit more than one and a half. Look at this guy! Just how many paper talismans does he have stuck on himself? And look at that huge black wok on his back!”

More laughter rose up as the Starry River Court cultivators began to mock Bai Xiaochun’s outfit.

As for the cultivators from the Polarity River Court, when they saw Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser, a few of them were unable to conceal the glitters of greed that rose up in their eyes. Clearly, they could see how amazing of a creature Bruiser was.

Bruiser couldn’t help but feel a bit uneasy having so many Core Formation cultivators staring at him. Almost instantly, the scales that covered his body began to stand on end, although the armor and paper talismans he was wearing made it impossible for anyone to see that. However, they could see the violet flames which sprang out beneath his feet, and the roar which echoed out from his mouth.

Bai Xiaochun had been feeling a bit anxious, but Chen Yunshan’s words, and the gazes which caused Bruiser to feel so anxious, stirred up his anger.

And yet, anger did little. Compared to the two other sects, the River-Defying Sect... really was too weak.

The three patriarchs were already starting to regret having brought Bai Xiaochun to participate in this challenge. Earlier, they had assumed that his battle prowess and precious treasures would be enough to allow him to get at least a few of the legacy seals and come away unscathed, no matter how many of the other Chosen wanted to harm him.

Besides, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had already laid down rules for how the fighting over the legacy seals would go. No one was allowed to kill any of the other Chosen, an arrangement which was for the benefit of all four sects. After all, none of them wanted their Chosen disciples to die in a place like this.

Because of all that, the three patriarchs had felt comfortable bringing Bai Xiaochun here. Even if he didn't come away with much in terms of the legacy seals, at least he could get to know some of the other Chosen in his generation, and get some precious fighting experience.

But now that they realized he would be single-handedly facing dozens of opponents, the three patriarchs were starting to hesitate.

In that moment, a booming like thunder filled the sky, and an enormous silver battleship appeared out of thin air!

As the ship appeared, countless bolts of lightning crackled about

in all directions, destroying the clouds around it as it descended.

That battleship belonged to... the strongest of the four Middle Reaches sects, the Dao River Court!

In almost the exact same instant that the battleship appeared, numerous figures flew off of it and began to descent at top speed. It took only a moment to determine that there were more than forty of them....

There were men and women among the cultivators, and all of them seemed to radiate an air that transcended the mortal world, as well as shocking cultivation base fluctuations. All of them... were cultivators who had stepped into Core Formation in less than a single sixty-year-cycle!

Middle Reaches sects controlled much larger territories than Lower Reaches sects, and also had access to much more resources. Furthermore, the energy of heaven and earth in the area was far stronger. Because of that, the sects here had many, many more Chosen than Lower Reaches sects did. It almost wasn't even possible to compare the two regions.

Along with the more than forty Core Formation cultivators, an intense pressure began to weigh down as the same white-haired old man appeared who had made the final decision in the grand hall on Mount River Defiance a month ago.

The old man looked over the collected cultivators, and didn't seem to be surprised at all that the River-Defying Sect only had Bai

Xiaochun with them. Smiling faintly, he said, “I would like to welcome the emissary from the presiding sect to oversee our four sects’ competition for the legacy seals!” Even as the words left his mouth, the clouds up above swirled together as if driven by a powerful wind, rapidly forming into the shape of an enormous eye!

As the eye looked down, it radiated terrifying ripples that caused all light to dim.

Instantly, the cultivators of the Starry River Court and the Polarity River Court rose to their feet, clasped hands and bowed. It was the same with the Dao River Court cultivators, as well as Frigidsect, Master Godwind, Crimson soul, and Bai Xiaochun.

Next, a booming voice spoke. “The rules covering this competition for legacy seals are the same as always. Killing... is not permitted. Anyone who intentionally ends the life of another will be destroyed in body and soul!”

Instantly, colorful light sprang up from the temple in the middle of the huge spell formation. The stones began to tremble, and the pressure weighing down began to fade away, making it possible for the cultivators to now enter the temple.

“Let the competition begin!” said the voice. Instantly, the forty cultivators from the Dao River Court began to fly toward the temple.

In the blink of an eye, the disciples from the Starry and Polarity River Courts followed. As for Bai Xiaochun, he gritted his teeth,

and then took Bruiser along in the same direction.

As he went along, he mentally reviewed everything he knew about the legacy seal competition. He knew that upon entering the temple itself, he would be teleported to a strange dimension. In the very middle of that dimension was a towering mountain surrounded by shocking spell formations that made it very difficult to approach the mountain itself.

A hundred legacy seals were located inside of the mountain, and would fly out in succession to the surrounding area, where the cultivators could fight over them.

Whoever acquired and absorbed the most would get some type of technique!

Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser followed the group through the stone spell formation. Considering that Bai Xiaochun was cautious by nature, he didn't hurry, and by the time he reached the temple itself, the other the disciples from the three sects had already entered.

Finally, he took a deep breath and looked over at Bruiser.

“Bruiser, remember to stick close to me. There are going to be a lot of bad people in there.” Bruiser gave a soft howl and nodded his head. Bai Xiaochun took a moment to straighten his garments, his paper talismans, and the big black wok. Then he gritted his teeth and stepped into the temple.

The moment Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser entered the temple, the light around them faded away, and jarring rumbling sounds could be heard. Outside the temple, intense pressure once again weighed down, making it impossible for anyone to approach the temple. At the same time, a light screen was projected into the air above the temple, cast by the stone spell formation.

Clearly visible on the light screen were the names of all four sects, next to which were glowing circles, faint and barely visible. The three patriarchs from the River-Defying Sect all exchanged glances. Those glowing circles represented the number of legacy seals acquired by the various disciples in the legacy zone.

As the circles glowed more and more brightly, they would create columns of light which... would make it instantly obvious how many legacy seals each sect had acquired!

Outside of the stone spell formation were the Nascent Soul cultivators of the various sects, who numbered in the dozens or so. At the moment, the red-haired old man from the Starry River Court looked courteously toward the Nascent Soul experts from the Polarity River Court and the Dao River Court.

“The Dao River Court will definitely take first again,” he said with a slight smile. “As for second place, well Brother Ouyang, I know that the Starry River Court can’t compete with the Polarity River Court. Therefore, we haven’t set our goals too high. Third place will do.” The red-haired old man chuckled.

The cultivator whom the red-haired old man had referred to as Brother Ouyang was a middle-aged man wearing the robes of the

Polarity River Court. Smiling, he said, “Brother Zhou, you’re overthinking things. Let’s just wait and see who takes second and third place.”

Despite his words, his expression was one of utmost confidence.

As the cultivators of the three sects chatted, they completely ignored the River-Defying Sect.

Master Godwind, Frigidsect, and Crimson soul all had unsightly expressions on their faces as they sat there silently.

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Chapter 363: One Should Be Enough

In this legacy zone, heaven and earth were currently cloaked in darkness!

The sky was leaden, a perfect complement to the pitch-black lands that stretched out below it. However, serving as a perfect foil to the darkness were the brilliant beams of light that were breaking out in multiple locations within the dimension.

Those beams of light all contained cultivators, and the brilliance they cast instantly illuminated the murky world around them.

Because of the new light, it was now possible to see that the dimension wasn't very large. Furthermore, in the exact center of it, there was a mountain with a peak so tall it pierced the clouds. It was so immense that anyone looking up at it would feel like a tiny insect.

The surface of the mountain was covered with numerous sealing marks, which moments ago, had been the same color as the surface of the mountain itself. However, the arrival of the cultivators caused them to glow with bright light.

Close examination revealed that the sealing marks on the mountain... were limited in number! There were exactly one hundred of them!

This towering peak was none other than... the Mountain of Legacy Seals!

It was also the brightest location in the entire legacy zone. As the crowd of cultivators appeared, Bai Xiaochun became visible within one of the beams of light.

Next to him was Bruiser. As soon as they both appeared, Bai Xiaochun activated his paper talismans, causing dazzling, colorful lights to appear all around him. It actually looked quite attractive; he was like an entity of colorful light.

Next, he helped Bruiser activate all of his paper talismans, until he looked equally as colorful.

Because of that, they became very conspicuous within the legacy dimension. Quite a few gazes shifted in their direction, gazes of derision and mockery.

Bai Xiaochun had already been nervous to begin with, and when he realized people were staring at him, he gasped, and his heart filled with icy fear.

“This place is so dangerous! So much killing intent!” Bai Xiaochun put a restraining hand on Bruiser’s back, and then looked around vigilantly. After confirming that people were looking at him but not heading in his direction, he breathed a sigh of relief. Then he began to glare back at people.

“I’ve never lost to anybody when it comes to contests like this. Am I right, Bruiser? Alright, come on. Let’s both glare at them. Show them how badass the two of us are!” From that point on,

whenever anyone looked over at him, Bai Xiaochun would glare back with a murderous stare, as did Bruiser.

One particular young man from the Starry River Court who was relatively close to the two of them smiled mockingly and said, “Junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect? Did you bring all of the paper talismans from your entire sect with you? Do you have enough? Or should I give you a few of mine?”

Bai Xiaochun turned and cast him a fierce glare. “Sure. Hand a few over!”

The young man’s scorn increased. Laughing coldly, he ignored Bai Xiaochun and began to head in the direction of the Mountain of Legacy Seals.

He wasn’t the only one. The disciples of the three sects all began to transform into beams of light that headed in the same direction. Because of how close the mountain was, none of them flew, but instead, sped along on foot.

Bai Xiaochun chose not to act blindly and without thinking. Instead, he took some time to assess the situation. The disciples approaching the Mountain of Legacy Seals were all going along on foot. Not a single one was flying. Furthermore, all of them stopped at a certain point roughly 15,000 meters from the base of the mountain.

Furthermore, the disciples didn’t simply scatter. Instead, looks of vigilance could be seen on their faces as they began to gather in

ranks according to their sects. Suddenly, rumbling sounds filled the air as numerous lightning bolts appeared in the area between the cultivators and the mountains, as well as a gale-force wind.

The lightning bolts were as thick as buckets, and the intense wind was pitch black and contained incredible power. In fact, the wind almost looked like black dragons sweeping back and forth within the 15,000-meter region.

Anyone with eyes could see how incredibly powerful the lightning bolts and the blasts of wind were.

Other types of magic began to spread out. There were gigantic hands, blades of ice, and tongues of fire. There were illusory projections that looked like shrieking ghosts.

Thorns began to grow up out of the ground, and deep crevices opened up randomly here and there.

Obviously, the 15,000-meter area was a place rife with danger. Even Nascent Soul Daoist masters would be leery of such an area, let alone Core Formation cultivators.

Bai Xiaochun looked over and noticed one of the cultivators from the Polarity River Court summon a puppet, which he sent into the 15,000-meter region. Before it got far, a bolt of lightning struck it, reducing it to nothing more than ashes. Bai Xiaochun gasped, and his face drained of blood.

“The jade slip said this Mountain of Legacy Seals was dangerous, but it didn’t say it was this dangerous! That puppet... was at the same level as Core Formation, and it got destroyed by a single lightning bolt!” Bai Xiaochun stood in place hesitantly, trembling the entire time.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t the only one to react with such shock. Several disciples of the three sects used various magical means to try to enter the 15,000-meter area on their own, but in the end, were left sighing in frustration.

“It must be because this isn’t the usual time to enter the legacy zone. The defensive spells around the Mountain of Legacy Seals must be much more powerful than usual....”

“Usually the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s emissary limits the power, but not this time....”

After discussing the matter, the three groups tightened their formations and then began to slowly make their way into the 15,000-meter area in groups. Whenever dangerous situations arose, they would pool their power to defend themselves.

Before long, booms filled the air, and the lands began to quake.

Bai Xiaochun stood there in hesitation for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. At that point, one of the hundred sealing marks on the Mountain of Legacy Seals suddenly began to shine brightly, then flew up into the air and spiraled out into the 15,000-meter region.

Almost instantly, all of the disciples of the three sects looked over nervously at the sealing mark as it circled out further and further away from the mountain. When it reached the 13,500-meter mark, the disciples started making attempts to acquire it.

The cultivators from the Starry River Court unleashed all of their cultivation base power, creating a stream of brilliant starlight fully 3,000 meters long. It only took a moment for the stream of starlight to bear down on the sealing mark as if to wrap it up and drag it away. At that point, the people from the Polarity River Court let out a bellow as they erupted with devil qi, summoning a huge flying head that shot toward the sealing mark and began to contend with the Starry River Court.

The Dao River Court had the most people in the legacy zone. When they looked over at what was happening, many of them took deep breaths and then began to emanate a strange power that seemed almost like natural law. Instantly, the air surrounding their group began to twist and distort.

Then, rumbling could be heard as a towering giant took form. Without any hesitation, the giant strode forward and reached out to grab the legacy seal!

As soon as the giant's hand closed around the sealing mark, it vanished and reappeared in the hand of one of the Dao River Court cultivators.

“It's mine!!” he cried excitedly, throwing his head back and

laughing as he absorbed the mark into his body. The other Dao River Court disciples were a bit jealous, and the Starry and Polarity River Courts were disappointed, but didn't let it show on their faces. In fact, some of them even smiled in congratulation.

Bai Xiaochun was left gasping at the scene which had just played out. He also understood the rules in this place a bit better now. Once the sealing marks flew out from Mountain of Legacy Seals, the people who were closer to the mountain would have an advantage in trying to acquire them.

“One should be enough for me!” he thought, gritting his teeth. He didn't set his expectations too high. As long as he could get one, then at least he could call the mission a success. Trying to get more than that would surely be too dangerous....

With that, he headed toward the mountain. By the time he reached the border and prepared to step in, the cultivators of the three sects were already about two or three hundred meters in.

Almost as soon as he entered, a black blast of wind shot toward him, filling his head with a sense of explosive crisis. Letting out a shriek, he backed up. Then a lightning bolt shot toward him, and he fell back again, scowling on the verge of tears. Within moments, he was back outside the 15,000-meter area. Only then did the various defensive magics ignore him.

“What do I do now...?” he thought. Not daring to enter the area again, he looked over at Bruiser, who stared back at him blankly....

Chapter 364: You Bullies!

“This won’t work!” Bai Xiaochun thought sullenly. He considered approaching the Mountain of Legacy Seals from a different direction, but after a quick survey, was convinced that the other areas were actually more dangerous than this one.

Viewed with the naked eye, all areas surrounding the Mountain of Legacy Seals were possible avenues of approach. However, with his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, Bai Xiaochun could tell that the general area where he and the members of the other three sects were was the only viable option for success.

Other areas were vastly more dangerous, and in fact, the three sects were all staying in roughly the same area, relatively close to each other.

Only by pooling their strength were they gradually making progress. The Dao River Court was strongest, and they were already about 1,500 meters in. On either side of them, and a bit further back were the Polarity River Court and the Starry River Court, the former being over 1,200 meters in, and the latter roughly 900 meters.

Bai Xiaochun was the only person standing alone on the outside.

“Since I’m on my own, there’s no way I can stay inside for long. I’m only going to have a couple chances....” Eyes bloodshot, he produced some more paper talismans and slapped them down on himself and Bruiser. He also pulled out some defensive magical

items.

Finally, he turned and whispered to Bruiser, “In a bit, when the right opportunity comes along, I’m going to make my move and try to grab one of the legacy seals. If anything goes wrong, you save me!”

Bruiser immediately nodded. He could see how dangerous the 15,000-meter area was, and although he was very happy to finally be outside on a mission with Bai Xiaochun, he was also very nervous.

Bai Xiaochun stood there staring at the Mountain of Legacy Seals, waiting for his next opportunity. After about ten breaths of time passed, another of the sealing marks suddenly began to glow brightly, then flew out into the air.

It flew a few circles in the 9,000-meter region, then went further out, whereupon the forces of the three sects prepared to begin fighting over it.

However, the sealing mark moved too quickly, and flitted through the grasping hands of the cultivators of the three sects. Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide, and then he howled at the top of his lungs as he activated all of his paper talismans, unleashing the explosive power of his Undying Heavenly King Body, and used the Mountain Shaking Bash. Worried that all that might not give him enough speed, he pushed off using the big toe of his left foot. In the blink of an eye, he was nothing but a series of afterimages that shot into the danger zone.

He was moving so fast that he was little more than a blur as he arrived in front of the sealing mark, and then reached out to grab it. However, in almost the exact same instant, the people from the Starry River Court shouted in rage and pooled their power to block his path.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as he was shoved backward, and the Starry River Court's stream of stars snatched the sealing mark away.

Bai Xiaochun didn't want to accept it, but was out of options, and had to flee back to safety. Along the way, he was struck by a bolt of lightning, which destroyed most of his his activated paper talismans.

"You big bullies!!" he fumed, glaring back. However, before his anger had much of a chance to flare up, two sealing marks suddenly flickered and flew into the air off of the Mountain of Legacy Seals. The Polarity River Court went all out in their attempt to grab the first, but the second managed to slip past the three sects. Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened, and then he burst into motion to make another attempt.

More lightning crashed around him, and he had to dodge seas of flames. All of his paper talismans were destroyed, and even his black wok was shattered. However, all of that brought him right up to the sealing mark.

"Beat it!" A cold snort ripped through the air, sending crushing

pressure into Bai Xiaochun's mind. At the same time, rumbling sounds filled the air as the Dao River Court's illusory giant stormed toward him.

The giant waved its hand, unleashing a terrifying burst of power, a magical technique that was no weaker than the magics of the world itself. Before Bai Xiaochun could do anything, the giant was upon him.

At that point, he drew upon all of his fleshly body power, as well as his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, to fight back. He continued to reach out his hand toward the sealing mark, which was now only nine meters away.

However, that was when the giant's fist struck out, sending a violent tempest of wind into Bai Xiaochun that carried him away, head over heels.

Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth as another set of paper talismans was completely destroyed, along with quite a few of his defensive magical items. At the same time, the force of the blow left him temporarily immobilized.

After all, the giant was backed by the power of a whole group of people, whereas Bai Xiaochun was acting alone. After grinding to a halt, he looked up as the giant casually grabbed the sealing mark which he had been just on the verge of taking. At the same time, numerous magics were unleashed by the world around him.

The giant looked over its shoulder at him, expression that of

scorn. “You think a bit too much of yourself!”

Then it shot back toward the group from the Dao River Court.

In the moment of crisis in which the magical techniques bore down on Bai Xiaochun, Bruiser let out an angry roar, grabbed Bai Xiaochun’s robe, and started dragging him backward.

However, that was when the stream of stars from the Starry River Court appeared and blocked their path, making it impossible for them to escape. The lightning slammed into Bruiser, causing blood to spray out of his mouth. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun had recovered by that point, so he grabbed Bruiser and rushed back out toward the safe area.

The people from the Polarity River Court watched Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser flee with contempt. A cold snort rang out and someone said, “The River-Defying Sect isn’t strong enough to get even one sealing mark. Be a good boy and stay outside. Don’t look for trouble in here!”

The Starry River Court people were equally derisive. Chen Yunshan even said, “If you try to mess with us, we might not be able to kill you because of the rules, but the defensive spells here could destroy you. Nobody would care if that happened.”

The evil intentions hidden within those words couldn’t have been more clear!

Even as Bai Xiaochun continued to retreat, a black wind hit him from behind, causing blood to spray from his mouth. When he finally made it to safety, he looked back to see that the cultivators from the other sects were all about 1,500 meters into the zone of defensive spells.

“Complete and utter bullies!!” he thought, anger burning. Then he looked down and saw how hurt Bruiser was, and his rage simmered even hotter. Glaring over at the cultivators of the three sects, he growled, “I don’t care if you snatch the sealing marks away from me, or even if you hurt me. But you hurt Bruiser!

“You people are forcing my hand!” Eyes more bloodshot than ever, he gritted his teeth and gave Bruiser some medicinal pills. Looking back at the situation, he saw that the Dao River Court was now about 3,000 meters in. With that, he blurred into motion, taking Bruiser toward one of the areas he had observed earlier with this Heavenspan Dharma Eye, a place that seemed impossible to pass through.

Meanwhile, outside of the legacy zone, at the border of the stone spell formation, the Nascent Soul cultivators from the four sects were looking at the glowing screen, and the four circles of light which represented the achievements of the disciples.

The Dao River Court’s circle was the brightest, with the Starry and Polarity River Courts also lit up, but not as bright. Only the River-Defying Sect’s circle had remained dark the entire time.

The level of brightness indicated how many sealing marks had been obtained, and therefore, the Nascent Soul cultivators from

the Dao River Court were all smiles. Of course, none of this was unexpected. As far as they were concerned, the Dao River Court should be the one to take first place.

The red-haired old man from the Starry River Court laughed heartily and said, “Congratulations, Fellow Daoists. It seems the Dao River Court really will take first place again.

“Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem the Fellow Daoists from the River-Defying Sect are doing very well. Definitely not as well as the Sky River Court did last time. They took second place back then, and almost tied with the Dao River Court.”

The faces of Crimson soul, Frigidsect, and Master Godwind, were all very grim. Eventually, they had no choice but to sigh. They had been prepared for defeat from the beginning, but had still hoped that Bai Xiaochun would be able to get at least one sealing mark.

“Fellow Daoist Frigidsect,” the red-haired cultivator said, “what do you say we make a little bet? I’m guessing your River-Defying Sect won’t be able to get more than two sealing marks!”

Frigidsect’s expression darkened even further, and it was the same with the other two patriarchs. As for the Dao River Court and the Polarity River Court, they looked very amused at what was happening.

Suddenly, Master Godwind looked over at the red-haired old man and slowly said, “A bet? What are the stakes?!”

The red-haired old man smiled coldly and said, “I happen to have a Starry Meteor from the Starry River Court, which can unleash an attack with power similar to the Deva Realm. I’ll put that up against one of your River-Defying Sect’s Heavenspan Battleships!”

Frigidsect’s expression flickered, and Master Godwind’s eyes glinted with incisive light. Starry Meteors were in fact spirit treasures from the Starry River Court, and were of similar value to Heavenspan Battleships. However, the Heavenspan Battleships were much more precious to the River-Defying Sect than Starry Meteors were to the Starry River Court. Clearly, this red-haired old man had planned this all along!

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Chapter 365: What's That...?

“We’re only talking about two sealing marks,” he said in a cold voice. “Is the River-Defying Sect really not even confident in getting two little sealing marks?” The red-haired old man narrowed his eyes.

Master Godwind maintained his silence, as did Patriarch Crimson soul. The two of them looked over at Frigidsect. If the River-Defying Sect won a bet like this, it would be a big gain for their sect. Getting a Starry Meteor would make up for some of the losses that were going to occur within the legacy competition.

However, if they lost, and had to hand over a Heavenspan Battleship, the overall battle prowess of the River-Defying Sect would be significantly reduced.

In the end, the Heavenspan Battleship belonged to the Spirit Stream Division, and furthermore, Frigidsect knew Bai Xiaochun better than the other two. Therefore, he was the one who would make the final decision.

Frigidsect looked up at the dark circle which represented the River-Defying Sect, and took a moment to think back to all the miraculous things Bai Xiaochun had accomplished. If they won the bet, it would be a big boost in confidence and morale for the sect. If they lost.... Well, even refusing to take the bet would mean that they had lost to the other three sects.

The stakes were high, but the truth was that the River-Defying

Sect didn't actually have much to lose.

“You're on!” Frigidsect said through gritted teeth. In response, the red-haired old man laughed heartily. The truth was that earlier, he had already given orders to the disciples who had gone into the legacy zone.

Not only was their mission to get as many legacy seals as possible, they were also to stop the River-Defying Sect from getting even a single one!

“Considering that,” he thought, “it's theoretically possible he could get a single seal by accident. But he definitely won't be able to get two!” Inwardly, he was chuckling coldly. What made him even more confident was that he knew that because it was not the usual appointed time for the trial by fire, the defensive spell zone outside the Mountain of Legacy Seals would be more difficult. Therefore, it would be virtually impossible for Bai Xiaochun to get close to the mountain on his own.

The Dao and Polarity River Courts were paying close attention to what was happening. It was obvious to them what the Starry River Court was trying to; not only were they trying to secure the resources which had once belonged to the Sky River Court, they were trying to weaken the River-Defying Sect. In the future, it was easy to imagine how they, in their greed, would begin to swallow up the River-Defying Sect to strengthen themselves!

After all, the Starry River Court bordered the River-Defying Sect!

In the past, the Sky River Court had completely dominated the Starry River Court, and on many situations, the Starry River Court had been forced to wait to see what the Sky River Court did before they themselves took action. But now, the Sky River Court was no more, and the Starry River Court had a new neighbor!

As the matter with the bet played out on the outside, the Dao River Court forces inside the legacy zone reached the 3,600-meter mark. Apparently, that was their limit. Not even their powerful giant could progress much further without being destroyed.

The Polarity River Court was about 2,700 meters in, not quite as far as the Dao River Court. However, the Dao River Court wouldn't be capable of snatching every single one of the legacy seals, ensuring that the Polarity River Court would still be able to get a good share.

The Starry River Court was the weakest of all, and was only about 1,500 meters in. Despite being behind the Polarity and Dao River Courts, they would still be able to get some of the seals, and simultaneously deprive the River-Defying Sect of any.

By this point, about ten sealing marks had flown out from the Mountain of Legacy Seals.

Bai Xiaochun had led Bruiser to a point some distance away from the three sects, although they were still within eyeshot.

With his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, he had located the perfect spot. The pressure weighing down in the area was vastly greater

than the safe spot where the three sects had entered.

“Bruiser, I need you to shrink down,” he said, his voice cold. “Dad’s gonna take you to have some fun!”

Bruiser looked surprised, but a moment later, he shivered and began to shrink down in size. Soon, he was small enough that Bai Xiaochun was able to place him in the folds of his robe. Then, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, causing a tremor to run through him.

Cracking sounds rang out as he used the power of the Undying Live Forever Technique and his Heaven-Dao Gold Core to shrink down. Bones and flesh alike became smaller, until Bai Xiaochun was the size of a small child.

His clothing was too large, so he simply ripped it off. Then he waved his finger toward the ground, and a flash of black light could be seen as the turtle-wok appeared!

“You people are forcing my hand!” he said through gritted teeth. “I didn’t want to cheat!” Bai Xiaochun didn’t like using the wok publicly, but right now, he was out of options. Taking a deep breath, he lay down on the ground and dragged the turtle-wok over him.

Now that he had shrunk down, it was easy for him to fit underneath it, making it look very much like an actual turtle as it lay there on the ground.

Almost in the same moment, a delighted exclamation could be heard from within his bag of holding.

“Hahaha! You definitely deserve to be my pet! Good job, Little Bai. Master approves!” It was none other than the little turtle, who flew out with a pop and landed on the ground just behind Bai Xiaochun.

“You shut up!” Bai Xiaochun yelled. Ignoring the little turtle, he tilted the edge of the turtle-wok up and looked at the 15,000 meters of dangerous territory up ahead, then began to crawl forward.

The little turtle followed along, laughing. From a distance, it looked like two turtles, one big and one small, crawling slowly into the zone of restrictive spells.

Almost as soon as they entered, a bolt of lightning many times bigger than any of the previous bolts fell from above and slammed into the turtle-wok. However, the wok was virtually indestructible, and no amount of lightning could do anything to it. Bai Xiaochun felt some vibrations, but that was it. With the added protection of the wok, his Undying Live Forever Technique and Heaven-Dao Gold Core ensured that he was completely unharmed.

Off in the distance, the cultivators of the three sects were currently fighting over one of the legacy seals when they suddenly sensed that something strange was going on with Bai Xiaochun. The cultivators began to look over, and soon noticed the two turtles....

“What’s that...?”

“It’s a turtle shell!”

“I can’t believe that guy from the River-Defying Sect is using this method to get into the defensive spell zone! Hahaha! Bai Xiaochun actually found a turtle shell somewhere and is using it for protection?”

“Wait, it’s not just one turtle. Look! There’s an even smaller turtle behind the first one. Hilarious!”

Roars of laughter could soon be heard from the three sects. Even the group from the Dao River Court couldn’t contain their scorn. The people from the Starry River Court were laughing the loudest, especially Chen Yunshan.

“Bai Xiaochun,” he yelled through his laughter, “aren’t you the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect? I can’t believe you’re willing to become a turtle just to get some legacy seals. Come, come. Just kowtow to me a few times and I’ll give you a few for free. What do you say?”

Bai Xiaochun could hear the mocking of the three sects, and couldn’t help but let out an angry harrumph. “You just wait and see what happens!” he thought.

As he crawled forward, black winds screamed, and seas of flame battered him. Blades of ice shot toward him, along with countless

other magics. However, none of them could stop him.

With the turtle-wok on his back, he crawled relentlessly forward until he was 300 meters in.

The mocking cries coming from the three sects began to die down. In fact, many people's eyes began to widen, and gasps could be heard.

“What kind of turtle shell is that!?!?”

“How... how is this even possible? The area Bai Xiaochun is in is far, far more dangerous than where we are.”

“The lightning, the fire, the wind... none of it has any effect on that turtle shell. Woah! Look, he's picking up speed!!”

Jaws dropped as the turtle shell, apparently having become used to the area, began to go faster and faster.

600 meters. 900 meters. 1,200 meters. Rumbling sounds echoed out as the magics slammed into the turtle shell, and yet nothing could stop it from accelerating. Before long, it had passed the 1,500-meter mark.

“Impossible!!” Chen Yunshan howled. He simply couldn't believe what he was seeing, and was panting as a result. He wasn't the only one to react in such a way. Everyone from the Polarity River Court had similar looks of disbelief on their faces.

By this point, more than a hundred bolts of lightning had struck the turtle shell, and yet, it only continued to move faster and faster.

Of course, despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was hidden under the turtle shell, all of them knew exactly what kind of expression was on his face. One of utmost pride....

“Hmmmph! When Lord Bai takes action, he frightens even himself. I can’t believe you people dared to bully me!” Feeling very pleased with himself, he continued to crawl along on his hands and knees. Soon, he was 1,800 meters in. Then 2,100 meters. Then 3,000 meters!

Not even the cultivators from the Dao River Court dared to lightly enter such a region, but Bai Xiaochun didn’t seem worried at all. In fact, soon the cultivators of the three sects could hear Bai Xiaochun humming a little tune.

Not a single one of the dangerous magics in the area had even the slightest effect on the turtle shell.

“This... this... this....” Everyone was completely and utterly stunned.

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Important info: In the note attached to this chapter during its

initial release, Er Gen complained about some pain he was feeling while sitting and typing. Over the course of the following several chapters, he included more and more such notes. He tried various folk remedies but nothing helped, and the pain started to reach excruciating levels. He eventually went to the hospital and found that he had some sort of hemorrhoid or other such condition, and needed surgery to fix the problem. He eventually did have surgery, after which he had to write chapters while laying on his stomach. The recovery process lasted for a while before he was able to get back to normal. Throughout that time, he mostly kept to his release schedule, but missed a few days here and there and slowed down once or twice. He also chronicled the situation in his post-chapter notes. Instead of translating all of those notes, I'm including this short explanation. It wasn't until well past 390 that he had recovered from the surgery to the point where he could resume writing as usual.

Chapter 366: Shameless! Cheater!

The cultivators from the three sects were virtually going crazy. Of course, they wished they could do something to stop Bai Xiaochun, but he was in an area of extreme danger that they didn't even dare to enter....

They could only watch wide-eyed as the two turtles sped further and further into the zone of defensive spells. 3,900 meters. 4,800 meters. Before long, Bai Xiaochun was 6,000 meters in, a distance that none of the rest of the sects dared to attempt to match.

“6,000... 6,000 meters!?!?”

“Dammit! How could this guy possibly get 6,000 meters in? Doesn't... doesn't that mean that he's going to get past the Dao River Court and have the first chance to get the legacy seals?!?!?”

As the cultivators of the three sects realized what was happening, shouts of astonishment and jealousy began to rise up into the air.

6,000 meters in, the magic was so intense that it felt like rain. At that point, Bai Xiaochun stopped for a moment, slowly lifted the edge of the turtle-wok and looked out with eager anticipation.

He could hear the shouts of astonishment coming from behind him, and it made him happier than ever. Even as he wallowed in his pride, the Mountain of Legacy Seals began to tremble, and a legacy seal flew out. As it circled about, it got closer and closer to Bai Xiaochun.

“Hahaha! Now nobody can even think of stealing it from me. Hey little legacy seal, come over here!” Smiling broadly, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, and then waved his finger at the incoming legacy seal.

Whoever was closest to the legacy seals obviously had the advantage, and at the moment, nobody was there to compete with Bai Xiaochun. The legacy seal shivered in place, then shot toward Bai Xiaochun, disappearing into the turtle shell.

“Got one!” he cried excitedly, absorbing it.

When the cultivators of the three sects saw this happen, their eyes turned as red as rabbits’. That was especially true of the people from the Dao River Court. They poured power into their giant to try to get it to move forward, and even as they did, another legacy seal flew out and was grabbed by Bai Xiaochun. The rage of the cultivators burned hot and bright.

“Are you looking to die, Bai Xiaochun!?!?”

“This isn’t fair!!”

“You’re pushing things too far, Bai Xiaochun!!”

Bai Xiaochun only began to hum his little tune louder than before. After resting for a bit longer under the turtle shell, he saw a third legacy seal, which he quickly sucked into the shell.

“I guess I’ll just wait here and grab each one as it comes along. Hmph!” Feeling more pleased than ever, and more awesome, Bai Xiaochun thought about bringing out his mirror to ask imposter Nightcrypt how amazing he was.

However, it didn’t seem like a good idea at the moment, so he suppressed it.

He was feeling quite comfortable underneath the turtle shell, grabbing legacy seals at leisure. However, the cultivators of the three sects were simmering on the point of complete madness.

If things kept going the way they were, then Bai Xiaochun would likely pull off a miracle, a miracle that would leave them humiliated more than they had been in years!

That was especially true of the dozens of Core Formation Chosen from the Dao River Court. The pressure on them was suddenly quite intense. The entire group went all out, causing the illusory giant to turn even more corporeal, and then carry them forward 1,500 meters in a wild sprint.

The Polarity and Starry River Court cultivators also took various risks, gritting their teeth to shoot forward once again.

The three sects advanced in grand fashion, with cultivators using all sorts of magical items, divine abilities and magical techniques. They utilized everything within their power to try to head deeper into the danger zone.

When Bai Xiaochun sensed the surge of energy behind him, and realized that the three sects were trying to catch up, his anger flared.

“This is my spot! I can’t believe you people are going to try to steal from me again. Complete bullies!!” Gritting his teeth, he hunkered down in the turtle shell and started crawling forward again.

The little turtle followed along, laughing in amusement.

Time passed. As Bai Xiaochun crawled forward, he continued to grab the legacy seals as they flew out. Eventually, the Dao River Court reached the 6,000-meter mark. The Polarity River Court was right behind them, and even the Starry River Court had reached the 3,600-meter mark. All three sects had truly reached their limit. And yet, to their complete despair, Bai Xiaochun had already crawled up to the 9,000-meter mark.

And he kept going. Soon, he reached 10,500 meters. Then 12,000....

The distances involved left the Dao River Court in a state of complete hopelessness. The Polarity River Court was filled with bitterness, and the Starry River Court was going mad. One legacy seal after another flew out and was taken by Bai Xiaochun. All the cultivators were filled with a sense of indescribable powerlessness.

“12,000... 12,000 meters....”

“This can’t really be happening....” As of this moment, the Starry River Court had two legacy seals, the Polarity River Court had one more than them, and the Dao River Court had the most with five.

All of the other legacy seals were going to Bai Xiaochun....

To make matters even worse, Bai Xiaochun was loudly announcing how many he’d acquired.

“Thirty-one!”

“Thirty-seven!”

“Forty-three!”

The Mountain of Legacy Seals was shaking violently. From ancient times until now, nothing like this had ever happened. No one had ever gotten so close to the mountain, or acquired so many legacy seals.

Bai Xiaochun was completely elated. He even took a moment to look back at the cultivators from the other three sects, and felt more wonderful than ever. After that, he decided he might as well keep crawling forward.

“Forty-seven!”

“Fifty-three!”

“Fifty-seven!”

Bai Xiaochun’s voice continued to ring out as he got closer and closer to the Mountain of Legacy Seals. The cultivators of the three sects felt as if wild beasts were trampling their hearts. As they watched Bai Xiaochun, their eyes burned with madness and killing intent. From the look of things, if they could, they would ignore the rules and simply kill him.

“Shut up!!”

“Dammit. You’re completely shameless! Cheater!!”

“I’m gonna kill you!!!”

Bai Xiaochun turned around and disdainfully lifted the back edge of the turtle-wok to peer out at the three sects. Then he cried out as loudly as possible, “Do you people dare to come over here!? We can have an epic fight. I dare you! Come on! I’m waiting for you right here!”

Saying such words was like pouring fuel onto the fire. The three sects exploded with rage, especially Chen Yunshan, whose face was distorted from fury.

A moment passed, and then Bai Xiaochun sighed and said, “Why aren’t any of you coming over? How about.... you all come

together?! I'll take you all on at once! What do you say...? Lord Bai is getting tired of waiting.... Ai, heroes are always so lonely. The scenery here is wonderful, what a pity none of you dare to come share it with me.”

With that, he grabbed another legacy seal.

Bai Xiaochun was used to calling out the numbers by now, so he yelled, “This is the fifty-ninth!”

After some thought, he was curious what it would be like even closer to the mountain, so he began to proceed forward again.

At the same time, the cultivators of the three sects realized that they couldn't stay in their current positions safely, and began to move in the opposite direction.

Of course, a scene of similar madness could be seen outside of the legacy zone....

Some time earlier, the River-Defying Sect's circle on the glowing screen had suddenly lit up.

Frigidsect, Crimson soul, and Master Godwind were immediately delighted. After all, that glowing light represented the honor of the whole sect. Based on how bright their glowing circle was compared to the other three sects, they were able to speculate that Bai Xiaochun had acquired a single legacy seal.

“Even one makes this whole thing worth it!” Crimson soul thought, tightening his hands into fists. Not too far away, the red-haired old man from the Starry River Court felt his heart suddenly tremble. He even frowned, although it only lasted for a moment.

“Congratulations, River-Defying Sect,” he said with a false smile. “You got lucky and managed to get a single legacy seal. However, luck will only carry you so far in—” Before he could finish speaking, the River-Defying Sect’s glowing circle suddenly got a bit brighter. Then, only moments later, it brightened again. Soon, it was brighter than the Starry River Court’s circle.

The Nascent Soul patriarchs from the other three sects were shocked, especially those from the Starry River Court.

“How is this possible?!”

The three patriarchs from the River-Defying Sect were also astonished, and exchanged incredulous glances.

The red-haired old man’s expression was extremely unsightly, and rage could be seen flickering in his eyes. All of a sudden, he felt as if the disciples he had sent into the legacy zone were completely useless. Even as he began to feel regret in his heart, the River-Defying Sect’s glowing circle got even brighter!

There were no rumbling sounds, but everyone felt as if their minds were crashing with thunder. The River-Defying Sect’s glowing circle was getting brighter with indescribable speed. A moment later, and it surpassed the Polarity River Court!

The Nascent Soul Daoist masters from the Polarity River Court couldn't prevent their expressions from flickering.

Moments later, the River-Defying Sect surpassed the Dao River Court. The white-haired old man took a step forward to stare more closely at the glowing circles. Everyone had looks of madness overtaking their faces.

The brightness of the River-Defying Sect's glowing circle was increasing so dramatically that it completely exceeded the imaginations of all present!

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Chapter 367: Living Mountain Incantation!

It was so bright that it was almost painful to look at, as if it were the only light which existed. Even the light from the other three sects combined was completely and utterly crushed by it.

“W-what’s... what’s going on?!?”

“Don’t tell me that all of the legacy seals are being taken by only one person from the River-Defying Sect?!”

“Impossible!!”

“Heavens, even when the Dao River Court took first place last time, the light wasn’t this bright. How... how many legacy seals does that represent?” The Nascent Soul experts from the three sects were all shocked. The red-haired old man from the Starry River Court was physically shaking, and his face was covered with an expression of utter incredulity.

“Maybe the circle got broken somehow...?” he murmured. The Nascent Soul Daoist master from the Polarity River Court was panting, and a look of unprecedented anxiety could be seen in his eyes.

Originally, the matter of redistributing the resources wasn’t very important to the Polarity River Court, especially considering the compensation the Starry River Court had offered to gain their support. However, if things kept going the way they were, that compensation wouldn’t even make up for the losses they would

incur.

Now, in this moment of anxiety, their anger toward the Starry River Court was growing.

If the Polarity River Court had such a reaction, there almost wasn't even a need to mention the Nascent Soul experts from the Dao River Court. They were all trembling, and looks of despair could be seen flickering in their eyes. If they didn't end up with more resources than they had in the previous competition, their decision to join in the Starry River Court's little plan would result in indescribable losses.

Furthermore, the sect's deva patriarch would surely be furious.

After thinking about the consequences at stake, one of the other Nascent Soul cultivators from the Starry River Court said, "Impossible. This is definitely a mistake...."

However, his words of consolation fell completely flat. The area outside of the stone spell formation descended into a deathly silence. All of the Nascent Soul Daoist masters were looking at the glowing circles, and it was completely obvious that the River-Defying Sect's circle was continuing to grow brighter.

At the same time, the circles representing the other sects hadn't changed at all.... Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind were all dumbstruck.

Even they had no idea what could be going on inside the legacy zone....

“What... is Bai Xiaochun... doing in there?” Crimson soul murmured, looking over in confusion at Master Godwind and Frigidsect.

Meanwhile, back in the legacy zone, the disciples of the three sects were howling in fury. Bai Xiaochun was currently 12,000 meters in, and continuing forward toward the Mountain of Legacy Seals itself.

By this point, deep despair had taken root in the hearts of everyone present....

From the first moment this legacy zone had been opened in ancient times until now, not a single Core Formation cultivator had ever reached the actual foot of the mountain. In fact, no one knew what dangers existed there, nor what would happen if someone reached that point.

But now, everyone watched helplessly as the damnable and shameless Bai Xiaochun used his cheating methods to pull off a miracle.

“It’s not fair....”

“I can’t believe you can actually cheat the system here!”

“Oh heavens, have you no eyes? Send lightning to smite this despicable Bai Xiaochun!!” Tears welled up in their eyes as Bai Xiaochun reached the 15,000-meter mark. He was now right at the foot of the Mountain of Legacy Seals!

As soon as he reached that point, his jaw dropped. It felt as if he had just passed through a sheet of water, and he involuntarily stopped moving. Oh-so-carefully, he tilted up the edge of the turtle shell, and could sense that there was no lightning, no black wind, and no magic of any other type.

“Eee?” Curious, Bai Xiaochun backed up a few meters, and sure enough, could feel the lightning and other magic battering the turtle shell. Then he moved forward a bit, and the sensation vanished.

Under the despairing gazes of the crowd from the three other sects, Bai Xiaochun went back and forth a few times to confirm that the nine-meter-area right beneath the mountain was free of any sort of defensive spells.

Trembling with excitement, he slowly pushed the turtle shell off of himself and stood up, cracking sounds ringing out as he returned to his normal size. Then, he clasped his hands behind his back, flicked his sleeve, and stuck his chin up. Glancing back scornfully at the cultivators of the three sects, he said, “Hmmmmmph! Wanna fight with me? Who of you dares to come over here and have a duel to the death with Bai Xiaochun!?”

No one responded, but if looks could kill, then the gazes falling onto Bai Xiaochun would have chopped him into mincemeat....

Seeing that nobody was going to say anything, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but sigh like a lonely hero. Then he turned and looked up at the Mountain of Legacy Seals, which was so toweringly tall that he couldn't even see the top.

"I wonder what it would feel like to touch it...?" he thought. After pondering the matter for a moment, he decided that it most likely wouldn't be very dangerous. Therefore, he cautiously reached out and tapped the surface of the mountain with the tip of his finger.

Nothing happened, and he breathed a sigh of relief. At the same time, the cultivators of the three sects simply stared with wide eyes....

"I guess I have nothing to worry about." Flicking his sleeve, he planted his hand firmly down onto the mountain and prepared to boast a bit.

However, in the moment that his hand landed on the mountain, rumbling sounds began to echo out.

The ground began to shake, and the sky vibrated as the dozens of remaining legacy seals on the mountain suddenly began to blaze with light, and then fly into the air!

They made a spectacular sight as they swirled about, each one radiating dazzling, multicolored light.

The cultivators of the three sects were completely shocked to see so many legacy seals flying out at the same time, and many of them unleashed magics to try to grab them.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun was just about to pull his hand away from the mountain when suddenly, all of the dozens of legacy seals began to speed in his direction.

He couldn't have evaded them even if he wanted to. He was like a black hole, and all of the seals were flying toward him, fusing into his body and merging with the seals he'd already acquired.

As they combined, a mnemonic appeared inside of Bai Xiaochun's mind, a fragmented divine ability!

Because it was incomplete, he couldn't quite make it out clearly. However, it was in that moment that the cultivators from the other sects who had acquired legacy seals earlier all began to scream. At the same time, their bodies began to twist and distort as the seals that they had absorbed earlier flew out from inside of them.

“How could this be happening?!”

“No! That's my legacy seal!!” Amidst the cries of shock and alarm, the legacy seals sped toward Bai Xiaochun and merged into him. As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun had... one hundred legacy seals!

Each and every one of those hundred seals was inside of him, merging together!

The fragmented divine ability was now complete and easy to see!

“Living Mountain Incantation!” Bai Xiaochun’s mind spun as the divine ability was imprinted into his mind. Even before the process was complete, he could tell that this divine ability was something completely shocking!

Suddenly, an ancient voice began to speak inside of Bai Xiaochun’s mind. “[Merge with the mountain, become a living mountain. Stand in front of the mountain and be called an immortal!](#)”

The voice started out as a mere whisper, but by the end, its words echoed like thunder.

That was especially true of the final word spoken, immortal, which was spoken with heaven-rending, earth-crushing volume!

Meanwhile, outside of the legacy zone, the River-Defying Sect’s glowing circle was exploding with intense light. In fact, the light was so bright that it formed a pillar which shot up into the air!

Heaven-shaking, earth-shattering rumbling sounds echoed out as the beam of light ascended into parts unknown. The Nascent Soul cultivators from the three sects looked on with minds reeling.

If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. However, as the River-Defying Sect's light grew stronger, the lights representing the Dao, Polarity, and Starry River Courts grew dimmer, until they reverted to their original appearance. The River-Defying Sect's beam of light... had consumed the light from the three other sects!

“This is impossible!”

“Something definitely went wrong. Majorly wrong!!”

“From ancient times until now, no one has ever lost a legacy seal that they had already absorbed!!” Looks of unprecedented shock appeared on the faces of the Nascent Soul cultivators, and it was with completely bloodshot eyes that they looked over at the River-Defying Sect's patriarchs.

Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind were looking on with wide eyes. They didn't have any idea what was going on inside the legacy zone either, but one thing was for sure; they couldn't help but feel strong reverence for Bai Xiaochun!

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For any of you who didn't read ISSTH, or perhaps forgot, the character for immortal 仙 literally depicts the character for person 人 squished to the side 亻 in front of the character for mountain 山

Chapter 368: Let Me Explain

“What is your River-Defying Sect doing in there? This is wrong!” The red-haired old man from the Starry River Court was trembling from the enormity of the situation. After all, the Starry River Court would be hard pressed to deal with a furious Dao River Court and Polarity River Court.

In fact, it was now possible to tell that only about a third of the anger of those two sects was directed at the River-Defying Sect, with the rest being reserved for the Starry River Court!

Therefore, the only option left for them was to try to drag the River-Defying Sect down too.

However, even as the words left his mouth, the sky above began to shake, and a gigantic, blinding figure of light appeared out of thin air. Instantly, intense pressure weighed down, and the lands began to quake. All of the Nascent Soul cultivators immediately clasped hands and bowed formally.

“Greetings, Emissary!”

The figure of light looked at the temple in the middle of the stone spell formation, but despite the level of his cultivation base, he wasn't able to see exactly what was happening inside. Of course, he didn't really care about that. Although a divine ability was being secretly imparted to a legacy successor, that in itself wasn't a major incident. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had a total of 300 secret legacies, and all of them were shocking in power. With the

exception of a few dozen that were particularly powerful, it was hard to determine which ones were stronger than the others.

“If I remember, the Living Mountain Incantation is rated in the top ten among the secret legacies. Unfortunately, it’s far too difficult to cultivate, which is why it’s virtually unheard of to see anyone use it.

“Now that I think about it, it’s been tens of thousands of years since this arcane pocket realm was tamed and this secret legacy was left behind in it.” The gigantic figure of light waved his hand, and ripples spread out across the sky like waves rolling across a sea.

“Today,” he said, his voice rumbling like thunder, “someone has mastered the Living Mountain Incantation. Listen ye of the four great sects: within a month, inscribe this person’s information onto a jade slip and deliver it to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to be kept on file!”

With that, the figure began to fade away. The only reason he had come was because he had sensed the Living Mountain Incantation taking form. Having accomplished his task, he immediately returned to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

As the enormous glowing giant disappeared, the Nascent Soul cultivators of the Starry River Court sat there with faces as pale as death. No longer did they try to accuse the River-Defying Sect of cheating. No matter what had occurred within the legacy zone, the emissary’s words had to be accepted as fact!

Bai Xiaochun of the River-Defying Sect had obtained a complete legacy, and had gained enlightenment of the Living Mountain Incantation!

Crimsonsoul, Frigidsect and Master Godwind exchanged glances, and could immediately see the excitement in each other's eyes. They even seemed to be sitting up a bit straighter than before.

The Dao River Court and the Polarity River Court sat there in taciturn silence for a moment. Then, they both took the initiative to approach the River-Defying Sect.

“Congratulations, Fellow Daoist Frigidsect. Hahaha! The junior patriarch of your honored sect has gained enlightenment of the Living Mountain Incantation, and even attracted the attention of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. In the future, he will surely rise to tremendous heights!”

“Fellow Daoist Crimsonsoul, now I understand why you were so confident earlier. This kid Bai Xiaochun is really extraordinary! Now that I think about it, he really stuck out to me back when we came to visit you before. He's like a dragon amongst men!”

These Nascent Soul Daoist masters weren't currying favor. Rather, they were worried about how to explain the matter when they got back to the sect, and were hoping that the River-Defying Sect would bend the rules and not take all of their resources....

Frigidsect, Crimsonsoul and Master Godwind were adept

schemers, and knew exactly how to handle the situation. Suppressing their excitement, they decided not to mention anything about the resources.

“Xiaochun is a naughty and mischievous kid,” Frigidsect said. “We’re just as worried as you are about what’s going on inside the legacy zone.”

The Dao and Polarity River Courts knew exactly what was being implied when the first thing Frigidsect mentioned was Bai Xiaochun’s safety.

“It’s impossible to send messages into and out of the legacy zone, so it’s hard to say what’s going on. But don’t worry, Fellow Daoist Frigidsect. The matter of the legacy seals is over. Everyone will be teleported out within the time it takes an incense stick to burn.”

Having heard this, Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind were much relieved, and even began to chat randomly with the other patriarchs. As for the group from the Starry River Court, they sat off to the side, their faces ashen as they ignored the other sects.

Meanwhile, back in the legacy zone, now that Bai Xiaochun had absorbed all of the sealing marks, the defensive magics faded away. There was no crushing pressure, no lightning, no black winds or seas of flame. In the blink of an eye, they were all gone.

Bai Xiaochun was completely absorbed in the Living Mountain Incantation, when suddenly Bruiser bumped him. Looking around, he realized that none of the defensive spells were in operation, and the cultivators of the three sects were about 3,000 meters away

from him, their eyes flickering with cold fury.

“The defensive spells are gone?” Bai Xiaochun shivered, and then subconsciously took a few steps back. The looks being given him by the three sects caused his hair to stand on end.

“Hey there, Fellow Daoists! You know, we’re all Middle Reaches sects. We’re on the same team....” Even as he stammered an explanation, the cultivators of the three sects began to walk wordlessly in his direction, the coldness in their eyes flaring.

Backing up, he continued, “Killing people isn’t allowed! Don’t do anything impulsive, okay? You definitely don’t want to fly off the handle....” Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding. He could tell that their tempers had been riled up to the point of detonation. Plus, not only did they need to vent their frustration, they also coveted his turtle-wok.

“Dammit,” he thought. “why did the defensive spells suddenly vanish?” Trembling and on the verge of tears, he continued to back up.

“Listen, Fellow Daoists, you guys all have big teams, but I’m all alone. Getting the sealing marks was just a matter of luck. I know you’re feeling frustrated, but you were doing the best you could! Don’t be sore losers! Come on, Fellow Daoists, let’s all calm down. I really didn’t do it on purpose....”

Surprisingly, some of the other cultivators actually listened to his words and stopped walking. After all, the matter was over now,

and fighting about it wouldn't solve any problems. However, it was still difficult to rid themselves of the fury which existed in their hearts.

Seeing that his words were having some effect, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. He was well aware that this was not the time to get people riled up. Although it was true that anyone who killed someone else would be executed in punishment, if he lost his poor little life in the process, what good would that do...?

Just when he was about to continue offering some consolation, the little turtle suddenly flew up and landed on top of his head. Bai Xiaochun's heart instantly began to pound with a feeling of impending doom. Before he could say or do anything, the little turtle cleared its throat and then shouted, "It seems you people just don't understand. Listen, I'll explain what my master just said in a clearer way. What he actually means is that you people are a bunch of moronic noobs. How dare you try to fight with my Bai Xiaochun? Stop gawking and screw the hell off!"

His voice was so loud that no one could possibly not hear him. The cultivators of the three sects who had just been calming down suddenly felt their rage burning hotter than ever.

That was especially true of the people from the Starry River Court, who immediately devolved into madness. Chen Yunshan was the first to give voice to his rage.

"Kill Bai Xiaochun! If we work together, we can completely exterminate him. As long as we do it together, there's no way our sects are going to do anything about it!

“That wok of his is a precious treasure!

“Kill him, and maybe the legacy seals inside of him will be available for the taking again!” Although nobody quite agreed with Chen Yunshan’s assessment of the situation, their killing intent was bursting. The rage which they had been suppressing had been ignited by the little turtle’s words!

Instantly, shouts of fury rose up as dozens of Core Formation cultivators all flew into the air toward Bai Xiaochun. It was a majestic sight as they unleashed all sorts of magical techniques in a deadly attack.

“That’s not what I meant at all!!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked as he took to flight. He was no fool, and knew that no matter how strong he was, his Undying Heavenly King Core and Heaven-Dao Gold Core couldn’t stand up to dozens and dozens of Earth Core Chosen all at the same time.

As for being screwed over by the little turtle, it only caused the hatred in his heart to grow. Tears were on the verge of leaking out of the corners of his eyes. Even as dozens of crazed enemies closed in, the little turtle popped its head out and shouted, “Bring it on you idiotic weaklings! My master can beat you all single-handedly. Bring it on! If you think you have what it takes, then fight!”

“You shut up!” Bai Xiaochun shouted. Then he reached out, grabbed the little turtle, and hurled him backward toward the crowd.

“Kill him, alright!?” he screamed. “He’s the one who said it, not me!” The turtle shot through the air so quickly that nobody could possibly evade him, and with smacking sound, he banged into the face of one of the cultivators from the Starry River Court.

The cultivator was hit so hard that it nearly knocked his teeth out, and as he staggered backward, the black silhouette of a turtle could be seen on his cheek, complete with four limbs, a head, a tail, and a turtle shell.

Then the little turtle whizzed through the air back to Bai Xiaochun.

“What do you think?” he said, looking very proud of himself. “Is Lord Turtle awesome or what? Hmph! When Lord Turtle leaves his mark somewhere, not even a demigod can erase it. A demigod! Did you hear that, you little punk? You’re going to have Lord Turtle’s mark on your face for all eternity!”

The cultivator reached up and felt the black mark on his face, and to his horror, realized that he really couldn’t wipe it away. Heart filling with even more anger than before, he spat the blood out of his mouth and once again began to chase after Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 369: Marks....

Bai Xiaochun's heart was thumping with pure fear.... If he was being chased by a single person, he would definitely turn and fight.

He might even try fighting if there were two or three people. Considering how heroic and incredible he was, he figured he could probably come out on top in a situation like that. After all, with the level of his fleshly body, it wasn't likely that only two or three people in the same cultivation level as himself would be strong enough to kill him.

But when he looked over his shoulder, he saw dozens of Core Formation cultivators all bearing down on him with burning killing intent. From what he could tell, if that many people all attacked him at once, it wouldn't matter if his Undying Live Forever Technique was even stronger than it was, he would still lose his poor little life.

Such thoughts filled his heart with both gloom, and also rage toward the little turtle.

The little turtle didn't seem to think he had screwed Bai Xiaochun over at all, though. He flew along off to the side, eyes gleaming with excitement, letting loose a stream of shouting.

“Hahaha! Bring it on, bring it on! Ya bunch of wimps! Let's see if you have what it takes to kill my master!” Then he lowered his voice to talk to Bai Xiaochun. “Don't be afraid, Little Bai. They're just a bunch of wimps, right? Come, come. Throw me back toward

them again, I'll crush them to death!"

"Shut up! This is all your fault!" Bai Xiaochun didn't dare to throw the little turtle back toward the crowd of cultivators from the three sects. When he thought about the enraged look on the face of the man who had been marked with the turtle, his heart trembled. As he pushed forward with greater speed, all sorts of dazzling magical techniques shot toward him. Ice mountains, lightning, seas of flame, twisting vines, hundreds of flying swords, and even a gigantic vortex-like wave of water.

Although the pressure weighing down from this tide of magical techniques couldn't compare to the defensive spells from earlier, the sheer number involved created a shockingly deadly force. Unfortunately, the turtle-wok wouldn't be of much help in this situation. After all, the restrictive spells from before had only blasted into the turtle-wok, and hadn't attempted to lift it up. These people wouldn't just let him hide underneath and pretend to be dead.

"I'm finished. Kaput. The Mountain of Legacy Seals is gone, why hasn't the teleportation begun? If it doesn't start soon, then I'm dead!" He continued to speed along rapidly, the enraged roars of his pursuers echoing out constantly behind him.

"Don't you run, Bai Xiaochun!"

"You were just blowing your horn a few seconds ago, why are you running like a scared rabbit now?!"

“Hmph! You challenged us to fight before, and now we’re giving you the chance. Stand and fight!”

Everyone from the other three sects was giving vent to their frustration, and their killing intent was so intense it caused brightly-colored light to flash in heaven and earth.

From a distance, the roughly one hundred Core Formation cultivators were like countless streams of light shooting after Bai Xiaochun. That was especially true of the Starry River Court cultivator who had been branded with the little turtle mark. His heart was completely overtaken by rage. No matter how he rubbed at his cheek, he couldn’t wipe the mark away. The odd looks given to him by people nearby were especially humiliating.

“I’m gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!” he screamed, his voice rising up above the voices of all the other cultivators.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Bai Xiaochun dodged the flying swords, pierced through the vortex, and leaped over a sea of flames. However, a few lightning bolts managed to hit him, causing him to shake visibly. Bruiser, who was still nestled in the folds of his robe, struggled to get free, but Bai Xiaochun pushed him back.

“Stay put, there are some bad people out here!” Unfortunately, the legacy zone wasn’t very big, and Core Formation cultivators could move very quickly. As a result, they were already starting to run in circles.

To Bai Xiaochun's despair, he found that the Core Formation cultivators were slowly getting closer and closer. Furthermore, the teleportation effect had not yet activated. Worse, the Core Formation cultivators were splitting up into three groups to try to surround him.

He was really on the verge of going crazy. Eyes completely bloodshot, he shouted, "You people are forcing me to do this!!

"Get over here, little turtle!" When the little turtle heard this, his eyes immediately lit up, and he shot toward Bai Xiaochun's outstretched hand. Then, he let out a whoop as Bai Xiaochun tossed him violently into the air!

A whizzing sound could be heard as the little turtle turned into nothing but a blur of afterimages. This was a type of speed that Core Formation cultivators couldn't match. In the blink of an eye, he had landed smack dab onto the right cheek of a burly man from the Polarity River Court.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the burly man screamed and staggered backward, blood spraying out of his mouth along with quite a few chunks of teeth. When he looked up, a black turtle mark could be seen on his face.

It had a head, a tail, four limbs, and seemed very lifelike....

The burly man's jaw dropped, and he reached up to rub the side of his face. When he realized that the mark wouldn't rub off, he

looked over at the cultivator from the Starry River Court who had a similar mark, and then his eyes turned completely bloodshot. Roaring with rage, he shot directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

In fact, he even unleashed some unique divine ability that caused him to suddenly accelerate past everyone else. Shockingly, it took him only a moment to be right in front of Bai Xiaochun.

“Time to die, Bai Xiaochun!” The burly man extended his right hand, and a powerful Core Formation aura erupted, creating a huge vortex. At the same time, the indistinct image of a huge devil hand appeared behind him.

Devil qi swirled out, pouring into the devil hand as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun to grab him.

As it closed in, it grew larger, until it was fully 300 meters tall.

Bai Xiaochun let out a shout as he waved his right hand, summoning a violet cauldron which instantly smashed into the devil hand.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out. This violet qi cauldron was formed by the power of a Heaven-Dao Gold Core, causing the devil hand to collapse as soon as it was hit. The resulting shockwave caused the burly man from the Polarity River Court to cough up a huge mouthful of blood.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't harmed in the least, and yet his anger

continued to burn. Reaching his right hand up into the air, he shouted, “Little turtle!”

The little turtle immediately flew back into his hand, after which he strode over to the burly man and reached his hand back.

“Now I’ll give you another!” he howled, then smashed the little turtle down onto the burly man’s other cheek. Then he hit his chest, and before the man could react, had hit him in nearly a dozen other places.

Blood sprayed out of the man’s mouth, and his eyes burned with madness. Finally, he drew upon his own life force to shove Bai Xiaochun and then speed away, the madness in his eyes replaced by terror.

As he fled, it was possible to see more than a dozen little turtle marks all over him....

“Bring it on!” Bai Xiaochun yelled confidently. Just when he was about to give voice to some taunts, more than a dozen magical techniques descended toward him like rainwater. The sight of so many lightning bolts, seas of flame, vortexes, wild winds and vines caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to seize with fear. Immediately, he fell back.

A moment later, countless magical techniques slammed into the spot he had just been occupying.

“You people are too brutal! Stop ganging up! If you have what it takes, come fight me one at a time!” Drawing upon the Undying Live Forever Technique, and his powerful fleshly body, he continued to flee at top speed.

Chen Yunshan from the Starry River Court immediately yelled out, “We have to team up to deal with a shameless villain like you! If we kill you together, it won’t matter that we broke the rules!” His words instantly bolstered the killing resolve of many in the group.

“Chen Yunshan!” Bai Xiaochun yelled, glaring over at him. He had been targeting Bai Xiaochun from the beginning, and that left Bai Xiaochun feeling very angry. Seeing how he continued to try to incite the crowd, Bai Xiaochun angrily threw out the little turtle.

“Hit him in the mouth! Shut him up!”

The little turtle sailed excitedly through the air. When he appeared directly in front of Chen Yunshan, Chen Yunshan’s face fell, and he tried to dodge. But he simply wasn’t capable of evading the little turtle. A boom rang out as the little turtle slammed into his face, sending all of his teeth flying out of his mouth as he staggered backward.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he screamed. Eyes completely bloodshot, Chen Yunshan ignored the mark which had just been left on his face and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, streams of starlight power descended onto him, giving him blinding speed as he chased after Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 370: I'm Gonna Kill You, Bai Xiaochun!

“Screw the hell off!” Bai Xiaochun roared, unleashing the Mountain Shaking Bash, sending him barreling toward Chen Yunshan with explosive speed.

They were both moving incredibly quickly, but Bai Xiaochun had the advantage. As he closed in, he stretched out his left leg and tapped his big toe on Chen Yunshan. A deafening boom echoed out, as well as a miserable shriek from Chen Yunshan as he was sent flying. At the same time, golden strands appeared on the surface of his body, apparently some sort of restrictive spell that was boring into Chen Yunshan and sealing his flesh and blood.

“You think a bit too much of yourself! One of my toes can send you flying!” Bai Xiaochun’s left shoe had exploded, revealing the fact that his big toe was flickering with golden light. Brushing off his robe, he produced a new shoe, put it on, then continued to flee.

Behind him, the enraged cultivators of the Starry River Court helped the trembling Chen Yunshan to his feet. Even as he coughed up a mouthful of blood, he realized that his cultivation base had been sealed, making it completely impossible for him to use it at all. Eyes flaring with madness, he howled, “Fellow Daoists from the Starry River Court, set up the formation and kill this guy. Fellow Daoists from the Polarity River Court and Dao River Court, if we don’t join forces and cut him down, how can we ever live down the humiliation of this day!?!?”

The cultivators of the Starry River Court exchanged glances and

then nodded. Unleashing the power of their cultivation bases, they called upon the same stream of starlight they had used to deal with the defensive spells earlier, sending it shooting toward Bai Xiaochun with incredible speed.

As that happened, the group from the Polarity River Court looked at each other, then howled, sending devil qi surging out to form a gigantic head.

The vicious-looking head let out a fierce howl, causing intense pressure to weigh down all around it as it shot after Bai Xiaochun.

The cultivators from the Dao River Court weren't any more willing to let the situation drop. If they did, they could only imagine what would happen upon returning to their sect: they wouldn't even be able to look anyone else in the eye! Moments later, intense rumbling sounds echoed out as the illusory giant appeared again.

Howling, the giant began to charge toward Bai Xiaochun.

From a distance, it was possible to see a stream of starlight, a gigantic head, and an enormous giant, all three of them deadly divine abilities, closing in on Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode.

"You guys are really serious, aren't you?! I can't believe... you're

actually using spell formations against me!!” By this point, his Undying Live Forever Technique was in full operation, and he was flying along as fast as his Heaven-Dao Gold Core could push him.

Unfortunately, the combined divine abilities of the three sects were even faster than that. Moments later, intense rumbling sounds could be heard as the stream of starlight appeared in front of him.

Bai Xiaochun trembled, and blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. Before he could do anything else, though, the huge head closed in, spitting out a blast of frigid devil qi that surrounded him, making it almost impossible to move, and freezing the blood that spilled out of his mouth. Before he could recover, the giant unleashed a fist strike onto him.

BOOM!

Frozen blood shot out of Bai Xiaochun’s mouth as he was flung backward, his hair in wild disarray and his eyes completely bloodshot. As he flew through the air, he slapped his bag of holding, producing a fistful of medicinal pills which he hurled into the air behind him.

Those medicinal pills contained all sorts of strange properties, and as soon as they exploded, they immediately caused problems for all the pursuing cultivators. Bai Xiaochun continued to flee, so nervous that he was bordering on madness.

“Dammit! Why hasn’t the teleportation started!? Patriarchs, I’m

about to lose my poor little life!!” Tears welled up in his eyes as he watched the cultivators of the three sects building up another volley of divine abilities.

“What are you scared of?” the little turtle said disdainfully. “I’m still here! Just throw me at them. They’re just using some lame Dharma Idols and magical projections, that’s all. Lord Turtle has destroyed so many of those kinds of things that he can’t even remember how many.”

Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and roared, “You people push things too far!!”

A murderous aura erupted out from him as he reached his hand back and then hurled the little turtle out as hard as he could.

BOOM!

The little turtle instantly appeared in front of the Dao River Court’s giant, which could do nothing to stop him. In the blink of an eye, he had pierced through the giant and was heading toward the Dao River Court cultivators who were operating it.

This time, the little turtle struck a female disciple. She was the type of person who radiated an extraordinary air, and despite her killing aura, she was quite beautiful. But then, an enormous smacking sound rang out as the little turtle hit her right in the middle of the face.

Tears leaked out of her eyes from the pain, and she let out an agonized shriek. Then, she realized that everyone was looking over at her with odd looks on their faces. Heart pounding, she pulled a mirror out of her bag of holding, and when she looked at herself, she screamed in bloodcurdling fashion.

“I’m gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!!!” she raved, her hair flying about in disarray. Without any hesitation, she shot after Bai Xiaochun as fast as she could. Unfortunately, he was far too quick and agile.

The young woman’s impulsive action instantly affected the other cultivators who were operating the giant.

As for Bai Xiaochun, considering how effective this tactic was, he quickly grabbed the little turtle and threw him out again.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Then, Bai Xiaochun went crazy, constantly tossing out the little turtle to fight back against the magical techniques and divine abilities.

Before long, more than half of his pursuers had little turtle marks on their faces, chests, waists, stomachs, and even some... on their rear ends.

The mark of the little turtle was actually a very terrifying thing; even if he hit their clothing, the mark would pass through and end

up on their skin. The marks even glowed, as if they were worried that people might not notice them.

Not even thick clothes or powerful magical defenses were capable of stopping the little turtle marks from glowing brightly. There was one young female disciple who got hit on the chest, and nearly collapsed when everyone looked over to see her and the glowing turtle mark there....

People used all sorts of defensive magical items when the little turtle closed in, but they were all useless. The terrifying little turtle was causing everyone in the battle to go crazy.

The divine abilities and magical techniques they were unleashing were influenced by their surging emotions, or perhaps by the turtle marks. In any case, they eventually just faded away.

“There’s too many of you for me to beat in a fight, but I can sure embarrass you guys to death!” Bai Xiaochun was shocked, and initially felt that the little turtle was being too vicious. However, as soon as he thought about how these people were trying to kill him, he angrily yelled, “Little turtle, are you sure those marks of yours can’t be erased?”

“Don’t worry,” the little turtle said proudly, “not even a demigod could erase them!”

With that, Bai Xiaochun glanced back at the cultivators who had no marks on them, seemingly itching to get at them.

“Great! They were the ones who pushed things too far, so they can’t blame me for this!” Gritting his teeth, he hurled the little turtle out again, sending him flying toward one of the unstruck cultivators.

Those unmarked cultivators were currently hesitating a bit. However, they had convinced themselves that the marks couldn’t possibly be indelible. In their minds, they would certainly be able to find a way to deal with them after returning to the sect. Even if they couldn’t, surely someone from the elder generation would be able to help them. Therefore, it was with burning rage that they continued to chase after Bai Xiaochun.

Booms rang out continuously as all of them were branded with the mark of the little turtle. Furthermore, all of their powerful divine abilities and magical techniques were faltering. The stream of starlight collapsed, followed by the huge head. Then the Dao River Court’s giant fell into pieces.

The only thing chasing Bai Xiaochun now was a mob of enraged cultivators, all of whom had turtle marks on them.

“I swear to the heavens, I’m gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!”

“Dammit! If I don’t kill you today, I’m not surnamed Liu!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s powerful fleshly body was being pushed to its limit. He was coughing up blood and covered with wounds, and yet, his counterattacks were incisive and penetrating.

Whether it was his own attacks, or the little turtle marks, he had pushed everyone to the absolute limits of fury.

Thankfully, it was in that moment that teleportation power began to fill the legacy zone.

Beams of teleportation light began to rise up, and the mob of pursuers suddenly stopped in place. If they didn't enter those teleportation lights before the time limit was reached, they would lose their chance to leave, and not even their sects would be able to do anything to save them. As of this moment, they had to abandon any hopes of killing Bai Xiaochun.

Having been forced to give up, they stared at Bai Xiaochun with such murderous glares that it seemed they were trying to cut him to pieces with their eyes.

Bai Xiaochun breathed a huge sigh of relief as he leaped into one of the teleportation lights. Looking over his shoulder, it was with great pride that he looked at the little turtle marks glittering on all of his opponents.

“Hmph! You guys are the ones who pissed me off! When I attack, I frighten even myself!”

The little turtle looked at the crowd of enemies and seemed completely satisfied. He even appeared to be sighing. From the look of it, he was more proud of himself than Bai Xiaochun was.

Chapter 371: Patriarchs, Save Me....

Outside the temple and the stone spell formation, the Nascent Soul cultivators were waiting anxiously for the disciples to emerge. Suddenly, beams of light descended from above, within which were the disciples of all the sects.

Without a single exception, the disciples all had black turtle marks on them, either on their faces, or on other parts of their bodies. The Nascent Soul cultivators from the three sects couldn't stop their eyes from widening at the sight.

Frigidsect, Crimson Soul and Master Godwind instantly had a very bad feeling....

“All of you....” Before any of the Nascent Soul Daoist masters from the three sects could inquire into the matter, another beam of light shot up from one of the enormous stones in the spell formation. Then, Bai Xiaochun appeared. The instant he was fully materialized, he shot at top speed toward the patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect.

“They're trying to kill me!” he shouted as he neared. “Save me, patriarchs! I almost lost my poor little life! They want me dead!”

Even as the words left his mouth, the other disciples atop the enormous stones devolved into madness. Disregarding the fact that they were in the presence of members of the older generation, they all shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

“I’m gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!!” Rumbling sounds echoed out as the nearly one hundred cultivators who had just returned all launched attacks. All of the Nascent Soul cultivators were completely taken aback.

As for Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind, their expressions turned very grim. Considering that all these people wanted to kill Bai Xiaochun, they could only imagine what dangers he must have been facing just now inside the legacy zone.

“Humph!” Crimson soul said, taking a step forward and stomping his foot onto the ground. A massive shockwave spread out in all directions, sending the cultivators of the three sects tumbling off their feet.

“Bai Xiaochun is the junior patriarch of the River-Defying Sect! Which of you dares try to kill him!?!?” These cultivators were all Chosen, but they were still just in the Core Formation stage, and couldn’t possibly compete with Crimson soul. The fearsome aura emanating out from him now caused them all to tremble inwardly.

Even as Bai Xiaochun cowered behind Crimson soul, Frigidsect, and Master Godwind, he felt very moved, and couldn’t help but muse that all the dangers he had faced in the legacy zone were worth it.

Frigidsect’s eyes glittered, and his expression was grim as he looked over at the Nascent Soul cultivators from the other sects and said, “Dao River Court. Polarity River Court. Starry River Court. You three had better give us a good explanation for this!”

Master Godwind stepped over to Bai Xiaochun and put his hand on his shoulder, using his cultivation base to scan Bai Xiaochun for injuries. At first, he seemed surprised, but then he gave Bai Xiaochun a look that no one else noticed.

Bai Xiaochun instantly understood his intention. Forcing his face to look even paler than before, he let out a wail, then bit his tongue and coughed up some blood.

Placing his hand onto his chest, he began to pant for breath. Pointing at the cultivators of the three sects, he said, “They’re... so vicious! They... they tried to kill me... I... I just....”

When the other cultivators saw this, the fury they had been suppressing raged even higher than before. They had all seen how tough Bai Xiaochun was with their own eyes. Furthermore, he had been as quick as a six-legged rabbit, which had made him very difficult to hit in the first place.

And yet here he was claiming to be seriously injured....

“Bai Xiaochun, you–”

Although several people began to shout in rage, before they could say more than a word or two, the white-haired old man from the Dao River Court grimly shouted, “Shut up, all of you!”

His thunderous voice instantly crushed down on everyone,

causing the disciples' hearts to tremble. Averting their gazes, they quickly went silent.

“The Dao River Court will provide an explanation within one month's time. Fellow Daoists from the River-Defying Sect, I hope you will take some time to consider the matter we discussed earlier, and provide an answer as soon as possible.” Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he forced a smile onto his face, then left along with the other Dao River Court cultivators.

As for all of the turtle marks on the disciples, he completely ignored them....

As the Dao River Court cultivators were leaving, the group from the Polarity River Court offered some similar words about providing an explanation, then left. Last was the Starry River Court. As for the expression on the face of the red-haired old man, it couldn't have been more unsightly....

Glaring at the disciples of his sect, he was just about to turn and leave when Master Godwind suddenly said, “Fellow Daoist, I expect that Starry Meteor to be delivered within the month!”

Without even looking back, the red-haired old man said, “I wouldn't go back on my word for a paltry Starry Meteor!” With that, he gave a cold harrumph and left with his disciples.

In the silence which followed afterward, Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind looked over at Bai Xiaochun with incredulity written on their faces.

Bai Xiaochun continued to clutch at his chest. Complexion ashen, he looked piteously over at the three patriarchs.

“Patriarchs, you have no idea how miserable I was in there. If things had gone on for even a moment longer, it would have been the end of me. You would have needed to pick a new junior patriarch for the River-Defying Sect.”

The three patriarchs weren’t sure whether to laugh or cry. After a moment, Crimson soul said, “How did you do pull it off?”

“Huh? Oh. Well, even I’m not sure. They wanted to kill me almost as soon as they saw me. It was really bewildering.”

“I’m talking about the legacy seals.”

“Oh, the legacy seals! Look, I don’t want to brag, but as soon as I went inside, the legacy seals acted as if I were their master or something. They just kept rushing toward me. I didn’t even need to go after them. It was a real headache.” Bai Xiaochun’s braggadocio caused the three patriarchs to simply stand there staring at him. Unsure of the situation, he cautiously probed, “So, did we win? I got all the legacy seals, and I even got this thing called the Living Mountain Incantation.”

Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind all exchanged glances, and then suddenly burst out laughing. The truth was, they didn’t care how Bai Xiaochun had managed to get all of the legacy seals. However, he did it, he was the junior patriarch of the River-

Defying Sect, and they were all on the same team!

“You didn’t just win. You won big!!” Master Godwind laughed heartily.

Relieved, Bai Xiaochun also started laughing, feeling prouder of himself than ever.

“Alright, let’s get back to the sect!” Frigidsect said excitedly, his eyes shining with approval of Bai Xiaochun. With that, he swept Bai Xiaochun up into the air toward the Heavenhorn Sword.

On the way back to the River-Defying Sect, the patriarchs told Bai Xiaochun about everything which had happened outside. It was almost unbelievable. They had acquired one hundred percent of the resources, which meant that all of the other three sects had to take the shares they’d acquired in the last competition and send them to the River-Defying Sect.

There was nothing they could do to complain about the matter. After all, the rules set forth by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect at the request of the three sects themselves. In addition to all that, the River-Defying Sect was also to get a Starry Meteor.

Because of all of that, the River-Defying Sect’s overall power would continue to grow stronger.

As of now, they were in a good position whether to wanted to act aggressively or be more defensive. Furthermore, because of the

situation with the resources, there would be more interactions with the Dao and Polarity River Courts. In the negotiations which would eventually come regarding the redistribution of resources, they could not only make the other two sect's happy, but probably get better benefits for themselves.

Most importantly of all, because of the heaven-shaking, earth-toppling events which had just occurred, the River-Defying Sect was now much closer to having a Deva Realm patriarch.

They had enough resources, and enough information. It wouldn't be long before Crimson soul, Frigid sect, and Master Godwind all had their chance to become devas!

With the solid foundation they were establishing, the River-Defying Sect was finally in a position to have a true position of power in the Middle Reaches.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't interested or skilled in politics or scheming, so as far as he was concerned, the dealings with the other three sects were best left in the hands of the wily foxes Frigid sect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind.

In terms of what the patriarchs wanted him to focus on, they made it clear right away.

"Matters between all the sects aren't really important. What you need to do now is work on understanding the Living Mountain Incantation. It's one of the three hundred secret legacy magics in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!"

“If you can master the Living Mountain Incantation, your battle prowess will increase to a shocking level!”

Bai Xiaochun immediately began to meditate upon the Living Mountain Incantation.

However, as he contemplated the technique, he realized that it came with some very harsh requirements in terms of cultivation.

Furthermore, it needed to be cultivated in a special environment. Based on the description that came along with the technique, that environment could only be found in a land of mountains within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect itself.

Bai Xiaochun was a little depressed about that, but knew that there was nothing he could do about it now. Even as he let the matter drop, he realized that they were nearing the sect headquarters!

There, the Blood Ancestor towered over the lands, and the aura of the Dire Skybanyan suppressed everything in the area. The four mountain ranges stretched out like dragons.

That was the River-Defying Sect!

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Chapter 372: They're Talking About Me!

Bai Xiaochun hadn't been gone very long, and furthermore, everyone had been aware of the purpose behind his departure. As such, the entire sect had been quietly awaiting his return, and wondering what had occurred.

Although everyone had been prepared for the worst, no one had been able to keep from wondering what it would be like if Bai Xiaochun managed to pull off a miracle.

Actually, the patriarchs had already sent word back to the sect about the result. Everyone knew that the River-Defying Sect had acquired one hundred percent of the resources, that the other three sects had been crushed, and that Bai Xiaochun had single-handedly driven countless Chosen crazy.

Therefore, as soon as Bai Xiaochun returned, the entire sect erupted into wild cheering that shook the heavens.

“Elder Brother Bai, you're incredible!”

“The junior patriarch smashed the Starry River Court and trampled the Polarity River Court. He's unparalleled under heaven!”

Bai Xiaochun had just stepped off of the Heavenhorn Sword, and when he heard all of the cheering, he was instantly enlivened.

Reaching over excitedly to tug at Frigidsect's sleeve, he said, "They're talking about me!"

Frigidsect cleared his throat, but didn't say anything. Pulling his sleeve out of Bai Xiaochun's grasp, he headed back toward Mount River Defiance with Master Godwind and Crimson soul.

Bai Xiaochun flew out into the air, filled with excitement at the sight of all the disciples in the sect cheering at him. After only a moment of thought, he realized that now was not the time to look icy and cold. Trying to appear as affable as possible, he cleared his throat and headed to the most crowded area he could find.

Over the course of the following days, Bai Xiaochun spared no effort in spreading different versions of the stories of his accomplishments in the legacy zone. However, in each version, he was always incredibly heroic and mighty, and single-handedly crushed his opponents.

Bai Xiaochun could clearly tell how much the disciples in the sect adored him. In fact, there was one occasion when he merely smiled at one of the female disciples, and she literally fainted from excitement.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun felt as if the whole world were beaming at him with approval. Even the sun seemed to be grinning....

Bruiser was also the subject of much acclaim, and immediately went to show off to some of the female beasts he spent time with.

Half a month went by before things finally started to calm down. After thinking about everything that had happened in the legacy zone, Bai Xiaochun was more concerned than ever about his cultivation base.

“I need to get stronger....” he thought. With that, he somberly went into secluded meditation to cultivate the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation and his Undying Muscles.

The Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation was a very profound technique indeed. Before, his cultivation of it had mostly consisted of him fumbling around in the dark. He had even been forced to ask some questions of Frigidsect before being able to wrap his mind around it.

“Use the technique to form the Frigid, then use the Frigid to evolve the Will....” Closing his eyes, he did as the mnemonic described, taking a drop of the Heavenspan River water that he had absorbed and transforming it into a power of frigid coldness.

Gradually, frigid qi began to build up around him, until frost appeared on the walls of his immortal’s cave. At the same time, his body began to get colder and colder.

A few more days went by, and finally, he opened his eyes. Deep within, a profound gleam could be seen; as of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was convinced that he had grasped the quintessence of the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation.

“First form the Frigid, then evolve the Will. Frigid....” He slowly lifted his right hand and looked at his fingers, the tips of which were covered with white frost.

“I don’t have enough frigid qi. According to the description in the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, people who manipulate frigid qi are divided into four levels. Frigid Acolytes, Frigid Adepts, Frigid Masters, and Frigid Paragons!

“Frigid Acolytes can summon frigid qi and use it to freeze objects within a small area. Frigid Adepts can freeze everything in a 3,000-meter area, and Frigid Masters can create a frigid land 30,000 meters across! Furthermore, those frigid domains can also be used to create clone projections!

“As for Frigid Paragons, they can even freeze portions of the Heavenspan River!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with a strange light as he contemplated what it would be like to freeze part of the Heavenspan River. Even freezing just a small portion would be an act of power that would leave everyone in awe.

“Right now, I don’t even count as a Frigid Acolyte.” Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath. He knew that this wasn’t a matter that could be rushed. The only thing he could do was slowly absorb Heavenspan River water and accumulate frigid qi.

The frigid qi would build up inside of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, and once the nine spiritual seas that made up the core were completely transformed into frigid qi, it would indicate that he was at the peak of the Gold Core stage.

“I wonder how many years that will take....” he thought, shaking his head. However, he didn’t feel anxious. After all, he currently had more than a thousand years of longevity to work with.

Therefore, he focused on his Undying Muscles. By this point, he could progress from his big toe to his second toe....

Other than his cultivation, he also had the River-Defying Pill to worry about. Although he now felt comfortable with the concoction process, he still hadn’t been able to come up with a way to solve the life force problem.

Although absorbing some of the qi and blood of the true spirit had improved his confidence, after some tests, he found he still couldn’t succeed.

Most importantly, he still couldn’t come up with enough life force from the Heavenspan River water.

“It must have something to do with my cultivation base. I’m just not strong enough to extract the boundless life force from the Heavenspan River.” He shook his head. For now, worrying about the concocting part wasn’t even worth it; he needed to figure out how to get the life force he needed.

As his train of thought progressed, he looked down at his bag of holding and recalled the idea he’d come up with before going to the legacy zone.

The root of the entire problem was that he needed life force, and he had long since determined where he would get it.

The little turtle!

The undying, indestructible qualities of the little turtle ensured that it had plenty of life force. However, the problem was that the little turtle would definitely not cooperate willingly. That was why Bai Xiaochun had begun to secretly plan how to concoct a certain type of spirit medicine.

He wanted to make a high-level medicine that would knock the little turtle out!

Although it sounded like a simple enough task, it wasn't. He would only have one chance to succeed; if he somehow tricked the little turtle into taking that medicine, and it worked, then all would be well. But if the medicine didn't work, then he could only imagine what lengths the feisty turtle would go to in his attempt to get revenge.

“What a headache!” he thought, sighing. After some time passed, he gritted his teeth and continued on with the concocting effort in the same way he had been before. Thankfully, the three sects were supposed to visit soon to deliver the resources they owed, which would surely include a large number of legendary spirit medicines. After some thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that he should definitely go study some of them.

As Bai Xiaochun went about his cultivation and medicine concocting, the cultivation world of the Middle Reaches was astir. Although the three sects had done everything they could to suppress news of what had occurred in the legacy zone, it was virtually impossible to sweep such a momentous event under the rug. Before long, everyone in the Middle Reaches had heard about it, and everyone was thoroughly shaken.

Furthermore, when everyone heard that the task had been accomplished by Junior Patriarch Bai Xiaochun alone, and that not only he had been up against dozens of top Core Formation Chosen, but he had also left a special mark on all of them, it led to a complete uproar. And that was before people heard about the Living Mountain Incantation.

By that point, people were starting to look into his background, and soon, the details about his life began to spread.

He had joined the Spirit Stream Sect as a teenager, and had fought a bitter battle against the Luochen Clan in which he risked his own life to defend his fellow disciples. He took first place in the Chosen battles in his sect, and was also an eccentric genius when it came to concocting medicine. Later, he infiltrated the Blood Stream Sect, and became both a blood master and their Blood Ancestor. He alone had prevented a war between the Spirit Stream Sect and the Blood Stream Sect, and even convinced the two sects to join forces. Then they absorbed the Profound and Pill Stream Sects. In the end, he became the junior patriarch of the newly formed River-Defying Sect!

Any one of the many things he had accomplished would be

shocking, let alone all of them together.

It didn't take long for Bai Xiaochun's fame to spread throughout all of the cultivation world of the Middle Reaches.

Of course, the River-Defying Sect controlled the information that leaked out about him. They had no desire for the world as a whole to learn his true nature. That was kept secret.

One matter that led to gasps throughout the Middle Reaches was that all of the Core Formation Chosen who had entered the legacy zone had ended up with turtle marks on their bodies and faces.

They were very strange marks, marks that would shine brightly at night, and could not be covered up, even with thick clothing or magical shields....

It was a shocking matter, and no matter how the three sects attempted to erase the marks, they couldn't. The combined efforts of numerous Nascent Soul cultivators proved useless, to the point where the deva patriarchs of the sects got involved.

Shockingly, not even the deva patriarchs could do anything about the marks. In the end, the entire cultivation world was stunned by the matter.

As for the Core Formation cultivators who had been affected, the matter left them filled with sorrow but unable to weep. Furthermore, they now hated Bai Xiaochun more than ever. Most

of them went into secluded meditation and refused to come out into the open. To them, being branded with that turtle mark was like a fate worse than death.

Because of the terrifying nature of Bai Xiaochun's turtle mark, countless people were terrified, and resolved to never, ever provoke him.

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Chapter 373: Three Breaths River-Defying Pill!

As the entire cultivation world was talking about Bai Xiaochun, something else happened. The Dao, Polarity, and Starry River Courts all took time to come visit the River-Defying Sect.

During the negotiations, the River-Defying Sect didn't refuse to compromise with the Dao River Court and the Polarity River Court. In the end, they reached an agreement whereby which those two courts only handed over some of their resources.

Because of that, not only did those courts come to understand the River-Defying Sect a bit better, they also developed their relationship in a good direction. After all, there had never been any hate between them, only an instinctual aversion to newcomers.

After everything that had happened, such aversion was much reduced.

However, when it came to the Starry River Court, the River-Defying Sect didn't back down at all. They knew that they had to put on a good show for everyone paying attention to the situation. If they let the Starry River Court off the hook, then it would be entirely possible for more situations like that which had occurred with the resource redistribution to arise in the future.

The River-Defying Sect had the upper hand, and the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had set forth rules governing the situation. The

Starry River Court had no other choice than to comply, and hand over all of their resources, plus the Starry Meteorite.

Of course, because of that, the two sects came to view each other as enemies.

The Dao and Polarity River Courts were more than happy to see such a development. After all, their patriarchs were also wily old foxes, and were well aware that the River-Defying Sect was merely asserting itself as a newly-arrived sect who had fought its way up from the Lower Reaches. Not only did they not fear conflict, they were also willing to work peacefully with the Dao and Polarity River Courts. Naturally, those two courts were fine with such an arrangement.

There were many schemes and plots involved with the overall situation, and none of that was of much interest to Bai Xiaochun. Almost as soon as the sect received all of the resources, he went over to look through the medicinal plants.

Generally speaking, not a single request by Bai Xiaochun would ever be denied in the River-Defying Sect, so before long, Bai Xiaochun had a whole collection of spirit plants in hand. He found all of the plants he remembered reading about, including some types of virtually extinct immortal grasses that he was confident would work well in a knockout medicine.

Next, he went straight into secluded meditation. During the concocting process, he did something fairly unusual. He intentionally gave voice to words which were completely different than what he was actually thinking.

It was all for the goal of knocking out the little turtle....

The concocting process lasted for a month. Afterward, rumbling sounds filled the immortal's cave, and to Bai Xiaochun's excitement, two fingernail-sized white medicinal pills appeared.

It was impossible to tell the quality of the pills, but a mere whiff of their aroma would cause all of the pores on a person's body to suddenly open up as if they were about to receive an incredible replenishment of energy. Anyone would think that it was an uncharacteristically high-level medicine.

That was because Bai Xiaochun had created a surface layer for the pill made from a very expensive medicinal plant. Based on the luster and sheen of the pill, it was clearly the type of amazing pill that would cause anyone to drool with desire.

Of course, it was only Bai Xiaochun's meticulous selection of various spirit plants that led to the color of the pill.

What was impossible to tell by looking at the pill was that on the inside, it contained the knockout medicine that Bai Xiaochun had conceptualized only after intense and prolonged effort.

After looking at the resulting spirit medicine, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but take a deep breath. Expression flickering with excitement, he pondered how to get the little turtle to consume it. Just asking him to consume it wouldn't work. Furthermore, he needed to prevent potential retaliation on the part of the little

turtle.

After some thought, his eyes sparkled and he murmured, “This spirit medicine is incredibly valuable. Very, very rare in the world. Based on the aroma, it’s obviously a spectacular delicacy. I don’t think I can bring myself to consume it now. I can only eat it in a critical moment, a moment when all of the extinct immortal grasses I used could be considered worth it. Only then could I possibly eat these two consummate spirit medicines!”

Panting, he carefully put the two spirit medicines into a small bottle, then sealed it and put it into his bag of holding.

After some thought, he seemed to still be worried about them, and quickly took them out again. After opening the bottle to ensure that the pills were still there, he tucked the bottle into the fold of his robe. Then he went to take a short walk. Only afterwards did he seem to be convinced that they were safe. After gritting his teeth, he sealed the bottle again and then put it into his bag of holding.

During the following few days, he took the bottle out constantly to check the number of pills inside.

At first, he checked after the amount of time it took an incense stick to burn. Then he checked every two hours. Then he checked every few days. Eventually, he settled on a duration of four hours. Every four hours, he would check on his pills as if they were precious treasures. Finally, a look of deep satisfaction appeared on his face.

“Hmmmph!” he thought. “Ah, little turtle, I’ve definitely piqued your curiosity. When the time comes.... hah!” That was what he was thinking every time he checked on the pills. Another ten days passed. Then, in the afternoon, Bai Xiaochun opened his bag of holding and was instantly shaken to the core.

The pill bottle only had one pill in it!!

Bai Xiaochun quickly suppressed his excitement, worried that the little turtle might notice. Plastering a look of shock onto his face, he rifled through his bag of holding, and after finding nothing, opened his third eye, which he powered with the full strength of his Heaven-Dao Gold Core.

Violet light spilled out, illuminating the entire immortal’s cave. Finally, after much searching, he managed to find a crease in the corner of the bag of holding, where he saw the little turtle!

The reason bags of holding could hold so many items was that they created small, unique dimensions. Such dimensions often contained cracks and fissures that weren’t visible to the naked eye. Although he had examined this particular crack before, he had never found anything unusual in it. But now, he just so happened to have found the little turtle!

The little turtle was already unconscious, his head lolled to the side and his limbs stuck out, unmoving....

Bai Xiaochun chuckled. He knew that the only reason he had

been able to spot the turtle was because he was unconscious. Were it not for that, the crafty little thing would still have been able to evade him, Heavenspan Dharma Eye or not.

After cautiously taking the little turtle out of his bag of holding, a snapping sound rang out, and it returned to its previous state. After shaking him, his head and limbs began to smack against his shell, producing distinctive knocking sounds.

Thrilled, Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Then he began to exact his revenge, shaking the little turtle as hard as he could.

“Who said you could curse me, huh?”

“Who said you could piss off that big crocodile, huh?”

“Who said you could provoke that toad, huh?”

“You got me injured and even got people to try to kill me!”

He angrily shook the little turtle, causing knocking sounds to ring out in the immortal’s cave. Before long, the turtle began to emit the fragrance which Bai Xiaochun found so familiar.

Bai Xiaochun’s excitement instantly grew, and he couldn’t help but think back with a sigh to how things had been before. Worried that the little turtle might wake up, he quickly produced a pill furnace and threw the little turtle inside. Then he poured in a large

quantity of Heavenspan River water. Settling his qi and clearing his mind, he set about concocting a River-Defying Pill!

Time was limited; he had no idea when the little turtle might wake up. Worried about the prospect of revenge, he went about the concocting even faster than usual.

Thankfully, he had reviewed the formula for the River-Defying Pill hundreds if not thousands of times, and was completely familiar with the process. As soon as the pill furnace heated up, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and got to work.

Three days later, the entire pill furnace was glowing bright red. Then, the pill furnace burst open, and the little turtle flew out and flopped onto the ground. At the same time, a virtually transparent medicinal pill appeared, which apparently possessed some level of intelligence, as it immediately attempted to flee.

As soon as the medicinal pill appeared, the sky above the River-Defying Sect began to dim, and a huge wind kicked up. The Nascent Soul cultivators' expressions flickered as, in almost the exact same instant, Tribulation Lightning formed up above!

A bolt of lightning appeared, and before anyone could do anything, it slammed down onto Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, causing it to burst open. Bai Xiaochun quickly tossed the little turtle into his bag of holding and then opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye. After locating the semi-translucent medicinal pill, he immediately began to chase after it.

By this point, all of the River-Defying Sect's Nascent Soul cultivators were flying out into the open. Although they weren't sure exactly what was happening, they knew that any event which provoked Tribulation Lightning was no light matter.

"Patriarchs!" Bai Xiaochun shouted anxiously. "Quick, set up a spell formation! I concocted a River-Defying Pill and it's alive! It's trying to get away!!" In response, Frigidsect shivered, and his eyes went wide. With a roar, he unleashed his cultivation base, causing intense pressure to fill the entire area.

Even the old monkey appeared, shooting toward the pill with speed that far surpassed Bai Xiaochun.

Thanks to the cooperation of several of the patriarchs, the fleeing medicinal pill was eventually apprehended by the old monkey. As for the Tribulation Lightning, the Nascent Soul cultivators handled it easily.

The old monkey excitedly held the pill up toward his nose and inhaled. "A Three Breaths version!" he said.

"That's fine too. Even a Three Breaths version will be useful!" The old monkey gave Bai Xiaochun a deep look that contained both approval and gratitude. Then he flashed into motion, disappearing with the medicinal pill.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit disappointed. He had concocted that medicinal pill, only to have it taken away by someone else. Just when he was about to go look for Patriarch Frigidsect to complain,

suddenly, an incredible pressure weighed down from above. This wasn't pressure from Tribulation Lightning, and it caused everything in the entire area to tremble. All cultivators of the River-Defying Sect felt themselves shaking as if heavenly might were descending!

Then, a bemused voice echoed out in all directions.

“How amusing. My first visit to your River-Defying Sect, and I run into some Pill Tribulation!”

Chapter 374: Hostage!

A boy appeared up above, wearing a long red robe. As he strode forth, the pressure that felt like heavenly might grew even more intense.

Ripples even appeared on the surface of the Heavenspan River, and the plants and vegetation in all four mountain ranges of the River-Defying Sect bent over as if they were bowing in obeisance.

If even the plants and vegetation were affected, it almost wasn't necessary to mention the cultivators. Frigidsect and the other patriarchs hesitated for only a moment; as soon as they saw that boy, expressions of dread rose on their faces.

Even the Dire Skybanyan was trembling.

“A deva....” Frigidsect said, trembling. He exchanged a glance with Crimson soul and Master Godwind. They had heard about this boy; in the vast eastern cultivation world, there was only one Deva Realm expert who maintained the physical appearance of a child....

He was one of the five Deva Realm experts of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Li Yuanda!

Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind immediately clasped hands in formal greeting and said, “Greetings, Senior Li!” The other Nascent Soul cultivators were shaken, and quickly followed suit.

Bai Xiaochun was standing off to the side, and immediately started to get nervous. This was his first time seeing a deva, and from the heaven-like pressure weighing down from him, it made it seem like the whole world was being crushed. Heart pounding, he didn't even dare to look at him directly. He couldn't help but marvel at how this boy, despite not being tall as Bai Xiaochun himself, was so incredible.

The boy looked at Bai Xiaochun with an enigmatic smile, but didn't say anything to him. Then he waved his sleeve.

“Frigidsect, the three of you lead the way to your grand hall. I have an important message for you!”

Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind looked very somber as they voiced their assent and then respectfully led the way. The Nascent Soul cultivators followed along with serious expressions on their faces. The entire River-Defying Sect fell into silence, and many people started to get nervous, wondering why the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect might have sent a deva.

Bai Xiaochun's nervousness was mounting. For some reason, he got the feeling from the way the boy had looked at him that something strange was going on. After returning to his immortal's cave, he began to repair the damage done by the bolt of lightning, frequently looking over his shoulder at the summit of the mountain. Suddenly, he thought of something, and opened his bag of holding to check to see if the little turtle was still asleep. Upon finding that he was, he put him back in the place where he'd found him.

“That way,” he murmured to himself, “even if he suspects something happened after he wakes up, I can just pretend I don’t know what he’s talking about.” Although he was pleased with himself for how he’d handled the situation, he couldn’t help but feel nervous about the arrival of the boy, and once again looked up in the direction of the grand hall.

In that very moment, the boy-like Li Yuanda was sitting down in the seat of honor in the grand hall on Mount River Defiance. Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind stood respectfully off to the side, while the other Nascent Soul cultivators waited outside.

“It seems I’m connected by destiny to your River-Defying Sect,” the boy said coolly. “I was the one who slaughtered the majority of the Sky River Court before your arrival.” Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind were shaken by those words.

“That’s why I was the one selected to come here today, to tell you about another of the rules in the Middle Reaches cultivation world.

“Every so often, all of the four great sects that exist downriver of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect must send an important disciple or two upriver to be [political hostages](#)!

“I’m here to take your hostages back with me to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.” The boy looked at Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind, whose expressions flickered with surprise as they looked up at him.

“Hostages?” Although this was Frigidsect’s first time hearing of the arrangement, it wasn’t anything out of the ordinary. After all, the four great sects of the Middle Reaches were important parts of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and were essentially like feudal vassals.

Master Godwind took a deep breath and said, “We’ll definitely pick our hostage candidates as quickly as possible!”

He was well aware that when a deva came with a request, it wasn’t something they could refuse.

“You don’t need to do anything,” the boy said calmly. “I’ve already made the decision for you. The main hostage will be Bai Xiaochun.” The hearts of the three patriarchs began to pound.

With that, the boy sent some divine sense sweeping out into the rest of the River-Defying Sect.

With the exception of the location where the true spirit was resting, which was a place he didn’t wish to disturb, the rest of the sect was like an open book to him, although apparently, he didn’t notice the monkey.

“Eee? There’s something special about that girl...!” A strange light flickered in the boy’s eyes, and he waved his hand, causing the image of a young woman to appear, seated cross-legged in meditation. That girl was none other than Gongsun Wan’er! “She’s going to be the other hostage! Go ahead and notify them, and also

explain that they can take no more than five fellow disciples of your sect to act as their Dao protectors. The entire group will come with me to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to continue their cultivation.”

The three patriarchs were grumbling inwardly. The truth was, they didn't care much about Gongsun Wan'er. Although she had respectable latent talent and potential, what they really cared about was Bai Xiaochun.

Master Godwind hesitated for a moment, and then said, “Senior—”

Before Master Godwind could finish speaking, the boy's eyes turned cold and he interrupted, “Hmm? Planning to refuse?”

Instantly, Master Godwind turned extremely cold, almost as if he were being frozen. He couldn't even speak a word.

Frigidsect quickly offered further explanation. “Senior, there's something you might not be aware of. Although Bai Xiaochun is our junior patriarch, the truth is that he's extremely naughty and mischievous, and definitely not the ideal candidate for a hostage. Senior, I'm just worried that he might cause problems for your honored sect.”

“That's absolutely right, Senior,” Crimson soul said with a smile. He was also aware of how important Bai Xiaochun was to the River-Defying Sect. “Bai Xiaochun isn't just naughty and mischievous, he loves concocting medicine. The downside to that

is that he always causes huge problems, creating plagues and harming everyone in the area. Not even chickens or dogs can escape his tribulations. If he goes to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, I'm afraid he really might cause a big catastrophe....”

“None of those things will be problems,” the boy responded. “The majestic Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect controls all of the eastern reaches, and leads the cultivation world on behalf of the Heavenspan Sea. Do you really think we can't handle one Core Formation cultivator?

“Even if he were more naughty and mischievous than he is now, even if he caused worse disasters, do you really think he would bring the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to its knees?!

“He likes concocting medicine? Well, in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, we have the best pill furnaces, the best medicinal plants, and the best concocting facilities. Whatever problems he has with concocting medicine, they can be solved there. Fear not! Bai Xiaochun might be a hostage, but at the same time, he will be a disciple of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

“Very well, the matter is settled, and there will be no more discussion. Go. In three days, I will take your disciples back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!” Clearly, the boy would brook no further argument. Waving his hand, he sent out a gentle light that carried Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind out of the grand hall, after which the door slammed shut with a bang.

Outside the hall, Frigidsect, Crimson soul and Master Godwind looked at each other with grim expressions. Unfortunately, there

was nothing they could do in this situation.

Master Godwind sighed and said, “Well, we don’t have much time. It won’t be difficult to explain the matter to the girl, but as for Bai Xiaochun... Brother Frigidsect, why don’t you go talk to him first? We can go later to offer more explanations. We also need to think about which disciples to send with him as Dao protectors.”

Of course, Master Godwind was very worried about the whole thing. Bai Xiaochun was the Blood Ancestor, and if mishaps occurred after he left, the Blood Stream Division would be at a serious disadvantage.

“Well, at least he can take Dao protectors, right?” Crimson soul said through gritted teeth. “Even though he can only take people from his generation, they’ll at least be of some help. Whoever he wants to go with him will have no choice in the matter. I’ll explain everything to them!”

Frigidsect sighed. Frowning, he headed toward Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave, where he found the restless and antsy Bai Xiaochun, and then explained the situation to him.

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, and he stared at Frigidsect, his mind spinning. “Hostage? In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect?”

He had read about political hostages in the ancient records, and knew that they always suffered all sorts of tragic and grievous fates. He was especially worried about going alone; being all by

himself in a strange sect didn't seem safe at all.

The River-Defying Sect was great! He had an incredibly high standing, lots of female disciples liked him, and people offered formal greetings to him wherever he went. The mere thought of going to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect caused his vision to grow dim.

Yelping, he lurched forward and grabbed onto Frigidsect's leg.

"Patriarch, I don't wanna go!" he wailed, "I'll miss you all too much! This is my home! Don't make me go!

"I just made a heroic contribution to the sect! I... I'm the junior patriarch!

"For years now, I've always been ready to stand up for the sect during hard times. I saved my fellow disciples from the Luo Chen Clan, I made a name for myself in the Fallen Sword Abyss, I went undercover in the Blood Stream Sect! But my biggest contributions have been to the River-Defying Sect! Patriarch, I don't wanna go!

"I can't stand to part with all of you. I'll miss my fellow disciples! Don't make me go, please...! Have Shangguan Tianyou go instead! He'd be a great choice. He's heroic and confident and super handsome! Heaven and earth would weep if he doesn't become the hostage. Or how about Song Que? The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect doesn't have somebody like him, do they? So send him! Or what about Beihan Lie or Nine-Isles? They would be great choices! If not, then how about Chen Manyao. Send her...."

Frigidsect felt a headache coming on. Sighing, he looked down at Bai Xiaochun and softly said, “Xiaochun, if I had any choice in the matter, I definitely wouldn’t make you go.”

A tremor ran through Bai Xiaochun, and he looked up at Frigidsect, looking like he was about to cry.

“I really have to go?”

Frigidsect tousled Bai Xiaochun’s hair. A kind look appeared in his eye as he said, “Yes, you do. However, you can take some Dao protectors with you. Also, it won’t be for very long. You’ll be back here at home before you know it.”

The practice of exchanging political hostages goes way back into Chinese history all the way to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE)

Chapter 375: Bai Xiaochun's Dao Protectors....

Bai Xiaochun felt as if his heart were withering. Looking up again at Frigidsect to make sure he wasn't pulling a prank, he finally exclaimed, "Why did you make me so outstanding, oh heavens? I can't believe that even the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect can't do without me!"

Moments ago, Frigidsect had been feeling sad, but after hearing Bai Xiaochun's words, he could do nothing but cough dryly. Now that he thought about it, in some ways, sending Bai Xiaochun to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect wasn't that bad of a choice after all.

"You leave in three days," he said. "Take this command medallion. It gives you the authority to select any Dao protectors from your current generation to accompany you...." With that, he handed Bai Xiaochun the command medallion and then turned to leave. Before walking out the door, he added one final reminder.

"You can select, at most, five Dao Protectors. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect won't allow any more than that."

Bai Xiaochun stood amidst the ruins of his immortal's cave, watching Frigidsect leave. Then he slumped down, somewhat in a daze. After wrestling with his thoughts for an hour, he watched the sun rise and then finally sighed.

"Ah, whatever. Since the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect wishes for

me to come, then I guess I'll go check things out." Although he was still a bit depressed, the idea of being able to select his own Dao Protectors was an exciting thought.

"I'm not going to take Bruiser with me," he murmured. "The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is too much of a strange and dangerous place.

"So. Dao protectors, hm? Who should I pick? I'm going to be in a strange place, so I'll definitely need someone good at digging up information!" With that, he began to think about everyone he knew.

"They'll need to be quick-witted, and good at making discreet inquiries. I need someone who'll be able to find out about everything in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and quickly at that. I'll need to know all the rumors! It will definitely require a pure genius...."

Suddenly, he slapped his thigh, and his eyes began to shine. "Xu Baocai!"

Back in the Spirit Stream Sect, Xu Baocai had always been adept at rooting out information. He knew who all the top beauties in the sect were, and how they were ranked. Bai Xiaochun also remembered how, whenever Xu Baocai got some new information, he would make a record of it in his little notebook.

"He prefers to hand-write things instead of using jade slips. Only a person completely dedicated to his work would do that. Yeah,

nobody would be fit for this position other than Xu Baocai!” Chuckling, Bai Xiaochun thought about how quickly Xu Baocai had fit into the River-Defying Sect as a whole, and how he knew about all the gossip and news. In fact, whenever Bai Xiaochun wanted to know anything, he was completely confident in being able to get an answer from Xu Baocai.

Without any further hesitation, he shot through the air toward the mountains of the Spirit Stream Division. As he neared Xu Baocai’s immortal’s cave, he saw Xu Baocai standing outside, his eyes sparkling like gems, and his expression one of intense sorrow. Almost immediately, Xu Baocai began to wail, “Sect Uncle Bai, I’m going to miss you so much! I heard that you’re going to become a hostage in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Who knows when we’ll meet again, Sect Uncle Bai? You take care of yourself!!”

“Wow, you got the news that quickly?” Bai Xiaochun said, surprised. He had just been informed himself, and yet somehow, Xu Baocai already knew.

“Yeah, that’s right,” Xu Baocai said proudly. “Nobody knows more about what’s going on in the River-Defying Sect than Xu Baocai. Wherever I go, I find out all the secrets. I have countless ways of ferreting out information.” This was actually what Xu Baocai was most proud of, and he couldn’t tolerate when people doubted his abilities.

“But don’t worry, Sect Uncle Bai,” he continued in a serious tone. “I’ll continue to make sure everyone knows about all of your stories. All the new recruits in the sect will hear everything about you.” Inwardly, he was feeling very pleased. The recent events in

which virtually all the female disciples in the sect had become infatuated with Bai Xiaochun had left him very depressed. As far as he was concerned, with Bai Xiaochun around, it would be very difficult to get a Daoist partner of his own. All of the girls he liked turned out to be smitten with Bai Xiaochun, which left him feeling very down.

As soon as he'd heard that Bai Xiaochun would be leaving for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, his heart had swelled with excitement.

Bai Xiaochun was actually very pleased by what he had just heard. Claspng Xu Baocai's shoulder tightly, a look of both sincerity and sorrow appeared on his face as he said, "Listen, my brother, I was actually hesitating before. After all, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will be an unfamiliar place, and I didn't want to drag any of my sect brothers and sisters into this situation with me. But after what you said just now, I completely understand!"

"Huh?" Xu Baocai suddenly realized that he hadn't gotten all the information, and that something about the situation was clearly off.

He opened his mouth to speak, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun said, "I need a Dao protector who can help me get information in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and that person is you!"

A tremor ran through Xu Baocai, and his eyes widened. Suddenly, he understood everything, and his face fell. "Sect Uncle Bai, um, my cultivation base is a bit low...."

Bai Xiaochun waved his hand dismissively. “I need someone who can get information, not someone with a high cultivation base!”

“B-but... but I’m really clumsy....”

“Ah, don’t worry about it. As long as you can root up all the secrets and get all the news about the places we go to, that will be enough. Besides, I’m well acquainted with your brave personality. The blood notice from years ago proved that. Alright, don’t bother with any pretence of refusing. I know you’ll miss me too much if I leave you behind. Therefore, the matter is settled!” Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily, but then he noticed that Xu Baocai’s face was a bit ashen, and he appeared to be on the verge of refusing. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun quickly pulled out the command medallion Frigidsect had given him and waved it in front of Xu Baocai’s face.

“A patriarch’s command medallion!” Xu Baocai said with a gasp. He was completely and utterly thunderstruck, and unsure of how to react. After a long moment passed, he felt like he was about to cry; he knew that he couldn’t refuse even if he wanted to. All of a sudden, he felt a bit sick to the stomach.

Bai Xiaochun put his arm around Xu Baocai’s shoulder and cleared his throat. Chuckling, he said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of everything. Come, come, Little Treasure. You know everything about the sect, so help me analyze the situation a bit. Which other dependable disciples do you think I should bring with me?”

Xu Baocai appeared to be on the verge of tears. The thought of going to the unfamiliar Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a terrifying thing. However, despite how much he didn't wish to go, he didn't have a choice. Based on what Bai Xiaochun had just said, it appeared that they would be able to drag some other people into the situation with them, which helped Xu Baocai focus.

Gritting his teeth, he pondered the situation for a moment, and soon thought of Master God-Diviner. Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner had developed a bit of a grudge between each other, and Master God-Diviner had even given him a nasty look before. Both of them had happened to like the same female disciple at one point, but in the end Master God-Diviner won her over. Sadly, Xu Baocai's cultivation base was too low, so he had been forced to accept the situation. However, he never forgot about what had occurred.

Therefore, when he realized that he had a chance to drag others into the situation with him, the first person he thought about was Master God-Diviner.

"Well," he said, "we'll need someone good at divination and fortune-telling. He'll need to have a high cultivation base, too. That way, when danger comes, he can divine the details ahead of time and we can figure out the best way to protect ourselves. If I were going to pick someone, I would definitely pick Master God-Diviner from the Blood Stream Division!"

"You're absolutely right. We definitely need someone who can perform divination!" Bai Xiaochun was fully convinced. Grabbing Xu Baocai, he headed toward the Blood Stream Division to find

Master God-Diviner.

To their surprise, when they reached Master God-Diviner's immortal's cave, they found him standing outside, his hands clasped behind his back, looking up into the sky. His bags were already packed and lined up next to him, and apparently, he had been waiting for them.

“So, you’re finally here,” he said calmly. He seemed completely cool and collected, almost as if he belonged in a higher world.

Looking a bit melancholy, he flicked his sleeve and said, “I long since divined that tribulation was coming my way. It was decreed by fate that I would leave the sect for a period of years, and that the tribulation would come during that time. Considering that someone from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect came to visit, it was obvious that my tribulation was nigh.”

With that, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun and Xu Baocai, his countenance completely otherworldly. “It doesn’t matter where you’re going. I will accompany you; it is my tribulation, and it has been decreed by fate!”

Xu Baocai couldn’t help but gasp at the sight of Master God-Diviner, standing there with his robe fluttering in the wind, looking like some sort of transcendent being. The words he had just spoken were enough to shock just about everyone.

Bai Xiaochun had a look of complete incredulity on his face as he said, “I... I can’t believe you actually divined that we were coming!”

But then, he walked a few circles around Master God-Diviner, who

suddenly recalled how terrifying Bai Xiaochun could be, and started to get a bit nervous.

“Alright, Master Snortsnort,” Bai Xiaochun said, “answer me this. Can you divine where I’m going to hit you in a just a moment!?”

“I–” Master God-Diviner’s face turned pale, and he instantly began to curse in his heart. He had complete and utter confidence that Bai Xiaochun would do just as he had said and launch a blow. Master God-Diviner suddenly shrank down, and instead of looking like a transcendent being, he reverted to his normal appearance. In fact, he even looked a bit devious.

Smiling, he said, “I was just kidding around with you, Junior Patriarch! Actually, sir, Master Godwind came last night and told me to get ready for you to come, and that I had to do whatever you told me. I was so excited at the prospect of accompanying you, Junior Patriarch, that I couldn’t sleep the whole night. Therefore, I decided to just pack my bags and wait for you.”

Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily and clapped Master God-Diviner on the shoulder. From the expression on his face, he clearly seemed very pleased with himself, and also was reveling in how much more intelligent he was than Master God-Diviner. As for Master God-Diviner, he appeared to be on the verge of crying. Worried that Bai Xiaochun would press the matter, he quickly offered a reminder.

“Junior Patriarch, Xu Baocai and I won’t be enough. We need someone with us who’s really good at fighting!”

Chapter 376: An Uninvited Guest

“It would need to be a very skilled warrior,” Master God-Diviner said somberly, “an expert who could keep us safe at all times. We need some muscle, a person with an extraordinary cultivation base, and even more importantly, shocking potential for growth!”

Xu Baocai was nodding his head vigorously, and Bai Xiaochun was looking at him with an intent stare.

Shaking his head, Master God-Diviner continued, “Don’t forget, we don’t know how many years we’ll be in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Therefore, we can’t be sloppy in our selection. The best thing to do would be to pick someone who will likely reach Core Formation shortly after arriving.”

“You couldn’t be more correct!” Bai Xiaochun said, eyes sparkling. Then he laughed loudly.

Master God-Diviner inwardly breathed a sigh of relief. Then he said, “Junior Patriarch, I have a suggestion. Why don’t you pick from either Song Que, Ghostfang, Nine-Isles, or Beihan Lie? Which one do you think is better?”

After some thought, Bai Xiaochun murmured, “Hmm. Any of them would do, actually. But Song Que is my nephew, after all. Going to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will actually be an incredible opportunity, so the most appropriate thing would be to give that chance to him.”

Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai exchanged a look of surprise, but didn't dare to say any further. Instead, they merely praised Bai Xiaochun for how much he took care of his juniors.

And that was how Song Que became their muscle. Of course, none of the three of them actually went to Song Que to tell him. Bai Xiaochun called over a disciple from the Blood Stream Division and sent him to deliver the news.

"I can take five people, and now I have three.... Hmm. Next I need to pick someone to be my confidante!" It didn't take much consideration for him to think of Big Fatty Zhang.

"Eldest Brother is definitely the best choice to be my confidante. Plus, even though the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will be new to us all, it is a riversource sect, which means that Eldest Brother will probably be able to get some good fortune of his own." With that, gave orders to Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner to prepare for departure in three days. Then he flickered into motion, becoming a bright beam of light that shot off into the distance.

After he left, Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner exchanged bitter smiles as they pondered what the future held for them.

When Bai Xiaochun arrived at Big Fatty Zhang's immortal's cave, he was in the middle of performing some spirit enhancements. Bai Xiaochun waited outside for a bit of time, a smile on his face, until Big Fatty Zhang finally opened the door. After seeing that it was Bai Xiaochun, he laughed heartily, then hurried out proudly with a flying sword in hand.

“What do you think? A threefold spirit enhancement!”

Bai Xiaochun looked at the sword in surprise. Apparently, Big Fatty Zhang had become shockingly skilled at spirit enhancement. He immediately offered some praise, which Big Fatty Zhang soaked up readily.

“So, why have you come?” Big Fatty Zhang said. “As long as I can help out, I’ll do it without even the slightest frown!”

Bai Xiaochun hesitated for a moment. Although it was true that Big Fatty Zhang might be able to get some good fortune in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he would probably be a lot safer if he stayed behind in the River-Defying Sect. After pondering the matter briefly, he described the situation and then left Big Fatty Zhang make the choice for himself.

Almost as soon as he heard what was happening, Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes began to shine. Reaching out, he grabbed Bai Xiaochun’s arm.

“I’ll go. No questions asked! The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! That’s a riversource sect, right? My Master said that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is the only place in the eastern cultivation world where they perform fifteenfold spirit enhancements!

“They even have a legacy technique for spirit enhancement! Ninth Fatty, you definitely have to take me.”

Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. Then he chatted a bit with Big Fatty Zhang to make sure he was truly determined to come along, before finally nodding in agreement.

“Alright, Eldest Brother. Meet me in three days at the grand hall on Mount River Defiance!”

After leaving Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Xiaochun returned to his ruined immortal’s cave on Mount River Defiance. There, he sat down cross-legged and pondered who to pick as his last Dao Protector.

“Xiaomei and Song Junwan... ah what a headache. I only have one spot left, and there are two of them.... What am I supposed to do? Who should I take?” Actually, the truth was that even if he could take both of them along, he would do everything possible to prevent that from happening. It really didn’t have anything to do with the number of spots left.

After much thought, he couldn’t come up with any good ideas. Therefore, he decided to stop thinking about it for a while. Closing his eyes, he slipped into meditation to calm himself and ponder what gains he might achieve in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Deep in the night, he opened his eyes, looked around, and sighed.

“I’m gonna miss this place too much,” he thought, shaking his head. He still hadn’t decided who to pick to fill the last Dao Protector slot. It was at that point that his expression flickered,

and he looked up, a somber and even intimidating look on his face.

Moments later, the air in the direction in which he looked began to ripple and distort, and a slender, graceful woman emerged. Completely ignoring his intimidating expression, she stepped forward to stand right in front of him.

A fragrant aroma accompanied this young woman, who was none other than Chen Manyao!

She wore a close-fitting black garment that only served to accentuate her natural beauty. As she stood there beneath the shimmering moonlight, she looked completely and utterly enticing.

That was especially true when her long, luxurious hair rippled in the breeze. Furthermore, there was something charming and soul-stirring in her eyes that made her dangerously attractive.

“What are you looking at me so viciously for?” she asked in a voice so soft and weak that it would cause anyone who heard it to be even more attracted to her, and would leave most men hard-pressed to resist the urge to throw her to the ground and ravage her.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at her with a frown. He knew that the sect leadership had come to an agreement with whatever group backed her, which was the only reason why she had been allowed to stay in the River-Defying Sect.

However, he still felt completely on guard against her.

“What do you want?!” he asked calmly.

“Oh nothing. What, I can’t just come to see you?” Somewhere in her eyes could be seen a trace of bitterness, like a grudge. As she looked at Bai Xiaochun, she realized that he was looking her up and down, causing a spark of aloof pride to rise in her heart. Just when she was about to continue speaking though, she suddenly realized she couldn’t move a muscle, and that a third eye had appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s forehead.

The violet eye seemed to possess a strange power, a power that left Chen Manyao completely immobile. A moment later, her right hand began to move, completely beyond her own control. It slowly rose to one of the buttons on her garment, and undid it, revealing some of her curvaceous body that had previously been concealed under the tight fabric.

After that first button was removed, Bai Xiaochun’s third eye closed, and Chen Manyao’s body returned to her own control. She was panting, and her forehead was beaded with cold sweat. Without even thinking about it, she backed up a few steps, her face flickering between the red of anger and the green of humiliation.

“You came here for a reason,” Bai Xiaochun said grimly, “and I’m not the kind of person who would pretend you haven’t. I’ll ask you again, what do you want?!” He was actually trying to imitate the way Song Que would talk to people, and he pulled it off more than perfectly.

Chen Manyao took a breath to still her heart. Not daring to do anything rash, she backed up again, and then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Junior Patriarch, I very much hope you’ll agree to let me take the final spot.”

“No way,” Bai Xiaochun said immediately. “Now get out of here.”

“Junior Patriarch, please hear me out. With me at your side, you’ll be able to communicate with the Wildlands any time you wish, and plus, I can find out all sorts of information for you. In addition to that, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect has a battleship that can take you to the Wildlands! My home....

“If you agree, I’d be willing to share some of the secrets of the Wildlands with you. Another thing you can’t forget is that I know a lot about the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and I can even—” At this point, before she could even finish speaking, Bai Xiaochun waved his sleeve, causing a wind to wrap around her in preparation to throw her out.

“Bai Xiaochun,” she gushed, “there are clues about Du Lingfei in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Take me with you and I can help you find them!! Only I can do that, because I’m a Wildlander! The agents in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect know me, but they don’t know you. I’ll even swear an oath to help track down those clues!” As she spoke, the wind around her slowed to a crawl, but when she finished speaking, it picked up again and carried her off of Mount

River Defiance.

Even as her anxiety built to a crescendo, Bai Xiaochun's cold voice echoed in her ears.

“Meet me in two days at the grand hall on Mount River Defiance.”

Having sent Chen Manyao away, Bai Xiaochun sat there silently at the edge of the ruins of his immortal's cave, looking up into the starry sky. If Chen Manyao hadn't spoken that one name, he would never have even considered taking her.

However, that name left him unsettled. By now, even he wasn't sure exactly how he felt about Du Lingfei.

It was almost as if nothing about her was real except for what had happened in those mountains.

“Maybe all I want is an answer,” he murmured, “and the truth....” As he sat there beneath the moonlight, his eyes flickered with reminiscence.

Chapter 377: The Celestial!

Time passed. Soon, the moon rose again, and now... there was only one day left.

Bai Xiaochun had filled all five spots for his Dao Protectors, and couldn't stop thinking about the benefits and drawbacks of going to the unfamiliar Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. On the final day, he went to visit Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei to bid them farewell, which left him feeling very down. Finally, he sat down cross-legged to pass the final night. It was around the third watch when Frigidsect appeared next to him, without word or sound to herald his coming.

He looked down at Bai Xiaochun, saw the sadness on his face, and sighed.

Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, looked at him, then looked away without saying a word.

“Xiaochun,” Frigidsect said in his ancient voice, “you’re going to be leaving tomorrow....”

“There are some things I need to explain to you. Master Godwind, Crimson soul and I have come to an important decision....” Overlooking the fact that Bai Xiaochun was ignoring him, he smiled and sat down next to him.

“I know that your goal in practicing cultivation is to live forever. The thing is, all of us want to live forever. That’s one of the

reasons why we all work hard at cultivation.

“Unfortunately, on the road that leads to living forever, there are other things that pop up, things that are sometimes even more important than our final goal. Right now, you probably don’t understand what I’m talking about, but by the time you reach my age, I think you will.

“The reason we cultivators can increase our longevity has to do with our cultivation bases. With Foundation Establishment, you get an additional 100 years of life. With Core Formation, 500. And did you know that Nascent Soul cultivators receive an increase, at minimum, of 1,000 years?! Do the math yourself.... If you reach Nascent Soul, how long can you live?” Frigidsect looked expectantly at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun had been planning to ignore Frigidsect no matter what he said. Regardless of how much he understood the decisions made by the sect, that didn’t stop him from feeling depressed about the situation. However, to hear Frigidsect bring up this topic, the topic upon which he was most focused in life, and in which all his hopes lay, ensured that he couldn’t hold himself back from doing the calculations.

It really was simple. Upon realizing that after reaching Nascent Soul, he would be able to live for 2,000 years, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone, and his heart began to beat.

“2,000 years....” he murmured, licking his lips. He might have been able to refuse to think about the Nascent Soul stage if he hadn’t calculated the exact numbers involved. But now, he could

hardly refrain from panting, and his desire to reach Nascent Soul was even more intense than ever.

“And again, that’s the minimum. If you use special techniques and methods, or certain spirit medicines, you can increase your longevity by multiple times over. Of course, people who do that have to pay a heavy price. Although their cultivation bases are not limited in any way, they are doomed to die eventually, no matter what happens. Such people live a long time, but not forever. I’m in that very situation.” Frigidsect sighed and looked at Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun looked back at him. “Do a lot of people do that?”

“Yes. But don’t forget that the path cultivators travel is a long and winding one. From Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, from Foundation Establishment to Core Formation, from Core Formation to Nascent Soul.... Many people are ejected off of the path before they can get very far.

“Out of a hundred Qi Condensation cultivators, one will be lucky to reach Foundation Establishment. Of course, that still leaves us with a lot of Foundation Establishment cultivators, but out of every hundred, one might reach Core Formation, if they are lucky.... When it comes to Nascent Soul, well... even if you count all the people who have died, the Spirit Stream Division hasn’t even produced ten of them, even going back years and years. Given that... do you think reaching Nascent Soul is difficult?”

Frigidsect sighed again before continuing. “It most definitely is difficult. The process is a challenging one, to say the least. Either you succeed and become a Nascent Soul Daoist master, or you fail and die. Of course, sects in the Middle Reaches have much higher

rates of success among cultivators who attempt to step into the Nascent Soul stage. However, that doesn't change the difficulty level for the people involved."

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything. He knew that Nascent Soul was a difficult stage to reach, and that even with his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, he would only have a slightly higher chance of success.

"Xiaochun, although becoming a hostage in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect means losing a bit of freedom and independence, the truth is that you have an extremely rare opportunity!

"The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is a riversource sect, responsible for watching over all of the eastern Heavenspan River. The spiritual energy there is very strong, far beyond that of the Middle Reaches. They have all sorts of unique techniques and divine abilities, plus many types of fantastic spirit medicines.

"After you get there, you can take advantage of all the power available in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to increase your chances of reaching the Nascent Soul stage!" Frigidsect was slowly raising his voice, causing it to pound into Bai Xiaochun's ears.

Bai Xiaochun could hear the sincerity in Frigidsect's voice, and could tell that he wasn't being dishonest in any way. It really was true that he would have a better chance of reaching Nascent Soul in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

That, along with his Heaven-Dao Gold Core, wouldn't give him a one hundred percent chance of success. However, he would have

an astonishing seventy percent chance!

Thinking of the matter that way, going to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect wasn't a bad thing at all. In fact, it was actually incredible good fortune when it came to his cultivation!

Much of Bai Xiaochun's negative feelings were already draining away, and his eyes were beginning to shine brightly.

"If you become a Nascent Soul cultivator in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, you can even join their parliament of elders, and would gain a relatively high level of power and influence. At that point, even being a hostage wouldn't matter, and wouldn't be an obstacle to you in any way. In fact, your hostage status would be a shield of sorts to you as a member of the parliament of elders!

"Furthermore, if you become a Nascent Soul cultivator there, it would be of incredible benefit to the River-Defying Sect!" After all of the analysis provided by Frigidsect, Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but let out a long sigh.

"Patriarch," he said quietly, "I think it's a big waste for you to be a cultivator. You should go off and become a diplomat...."

Frigidsect roared with laughter before tousling Bai Xiaochun's hair.

"I'm not finished yet! Stop interrupting!" Then, his expression turned serious. "Xiaochun, much like Foundation Establishment

and Core Formation, there are three ways to enter the Nascent Soul stage. The first is the simplest, and yet the most dangerous because of the high failure rate. Although you can make the attempt multiple times this way, every failure leads to a loss of longevity. That method is... using Nascent Soul Pills!”

Bai Xiaochun was listening very intently. There was no information in the sect records about the Nascent Soul stage, so this was his first time hearing such an explanation.

Frigidsect shook his head before continuing, “That method leads to a low-grade Nascent Soul, with only a slim chance of ever becoming a deva. It is also the most commonly used method....

“The second method is... by using a five elements heavenbeast soul! The so-called heavenbeast soul is the soul of a dead Deva Realm beast. All such souls have a certain measure of five elements power, and any cultivator who steps into Nascent Soul with one will not only be very powerful, they will also have a good chance at becoming a deva!”

Bai Xiaochun was shaken, and immediately committed the words ‘five elements heavenbeast soul’ to memory. Never could he have imagined that it was possible to reach the Nascent Soul stage with the soul of a deva-level beast.

“Then there’s the third method....” Frigidsect paused for a moment, his eyes shining brightly with both veneration and madness. This sort of expression was something rarely seen on his face.

Bai Xiaochun instantly started to get even more nervous.

“This last method is the stuff of legend. In fact... in the Heavenspan Realm, only one person has ever done it. The requirements are incredibly strict. That method is... by using five elements deva souls!

“A deva soul is the soul of a dead Deva Realm cultivator. One of the unique properties of deva souls is that each one contains the power of one of the five elements, either metal, wood, water, fire, or earth. To reach the Nascent Soul stage using this method requires... five different deva souls!

“Anyone who succeeds... becomes completely invincible within the Nascent Soul stage!”

Bai Xiaochun gasped. “Five deva souls?!”

To him, it seemed almost inconceivable. Devas were already rare to begin with; even in the Middle Reaches, there were currently only three of them. If you added in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, there wouldn't even be ten.

Considering all of that, using the five elements deva souls method seemed virtually impossible.

Frigidsect sighed. “From ancient times until now, the number of devas who have existed is very limited, and the souls of any who die are rare and precious items.... Because of that, you can see why using the five elements deva souls method to step into Nascent Soul is unimaginably difficult, and thus, the stuff of legend.”

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and couldn't hold back from asking, "Patriarch, didn't you just say that someone did succeed once? Who is that person...?"

Frigidsect didn't respond for a moment. Looking up into the sky, he said, "The Celestial!"

"The Celestial?" Bai Xiaochun was taken aback.

"He is the most powerful cultivator in the Heavenspan Realm... and also the one who rules over the four great riversource sects.... He lives on the island in the middle of the Heavenspan Sea.... The Celestial!"

"Common people like us can't even speak his name. If you do, he will sense it, and no one wishes to do that. That is why people simply call him... the Celestial!" Frigidsect sighed yet again.

"According to the legends, he reached Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment, Heaven-Dao Gold Core, and used the five elements deva souls method to reach Nascent Soul. The entire time, he [walked the heavenly path](#). You've had some contact with the Wildlands, so you can probably imagine what type of position the Celestial occupies!"

In Chinese "deva" consists of the characters for "heaven" and "person" put together, so all three of these paths have "heaven" in them

Chapter 378: I'll Be Back!

Bai Xiaochun reeled as he thought back to the old Wildlander he had spoken to by means of Chen Manyao. The things that old man had told him clicked into place with what he had learned just now, and suddenly, he understood.

If the four main branches of the Heavenspan River and the sects that grew near them were the feudal governments, then this Celestial... was the emperor!

Bai Xiaochun sat there in silence with Frigidsect for a long moment. Finally, Frigidsect rose to his feet and extended his right hand, within which was a blue-green walnut!

Apparently, the walnut had been crafted from jade, and inside of it was... a sleeping soul.

It didn't emanate any soul fluctuations at all, and in fact, even examining it with divine sense didn't reveal the slightest fluctuation. Bai Xiaochun stared at it blankly for a moment.

“Is that...?”

Frigidsect looked at the walnut, then at Bai Xiaochun, his expression alive with anticipation.

“Xiaochun, your service to the River-Defying Sect has gone above and beyond the call of duty. The fact that you are a member of the

River-Defying Sect... is a true blessing. Unfortunately, we are too small and weak now, and are unable to provide you much in the way of help. However, after discussing matters with the Fellow Daoists from the other divisions, we all agreed that it was appropriate to take this... a deva soul... and give it to you!" Frigidsect's voice echoed like thunder in Bai Xiaochun's ears, causing his mind and heart to tremble.

"A deva soul!?" Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened. If he hadn't just heard Frigidsect's explanation of the rarity of five elements deva souls, he wouldn't have thought this item to be of much value. But now, now that he understood everything, his heart was filled with waves of shock.

It wouldn't be a wild guess to assume that this deva soul was the only one in the entire River-Defying Sect. In fact, there might not even be a second one in all of the eastern cultivation world of the Middle Reaches.

After all... deva souls were items that Middle Reaches sects usually wouldn't possess. It was only because the Spirit Stream Division had once been the Frigid School that it had one!

"This...." For the first time ever, Bai Xiaochun didn't reach out to take the treasure being offered him. It was so valuable that he didn't dare to even touch it.

"We were going to give this to you eventually anyway," Frigidsect said with a smile. "We're just handing it over a bit early. Don't feel any pressure. After all, reaching the Nascent Soul stage by means of a five elements deva soul is something legendary, to

say the least. Think of this wood-type deva soul as a direction to follow. If you can't collect any other deva souls, then perhaps you can find someone in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who will trade you a five elements heavenbeast soul for it. Either way... we have long since begun to think about how to make your path to the Nascent Soul stage as clear as possible!"

Bai Xiaochun was trembling, and was even having trouble breathing. He looked up at Frigidsect for a long moment, then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

"Many thanks, Patriarch!"

"Very well. I've said everything I needed to say, and it's nearly dawn. I'll wait for you at the grand hall on Mount River Defiance with the rest of the patriarchs." Patting Bai Xiaochun on the shoulder encouragingly, he turned to leave. For some reason, he seemed especially old underneath the pale moonlight.

Bai Xiaochun carefully placed the deva soul into his bag of holding. His mind was currently in chaos; not only was he feeling really hesitant about leaving the sect, he was deeply and profoundly moved.

Soon, dawn arrived, and as the first rays of light pierced through the clouds and illuminated the River-Defying Sect, they revealed a scene of lush mountains and flowing rivers. Everything was peaceful and quiet, with pulses of spiritual energy filling the entire area. The River-Defying Sect truly looked like a celestial paradise.

A look of determination could be seen in Bai Xiaochun's eyes as he straightened his clothing and headed toward the summit of the mountain.

At the same time, Xu Baocai and Master God-Diviner gathered their belongings, mustered their courage, and headed in the same direction.

Big Fatty Zhang was very excited as he flew into the air, and as for Chen Manyao, she shot through the dawn air in a beam of colorful light.

Somewhere in the Blood Stream Division, an immortal's cave opened, and Song Que walked out. His face was ashen, his fists clenched, his teeth gritted. Unfortunately for him, he had no choice in the matter, so he flew up into the air and headed toward Mount River Defiance.

In addition to them, other cultivators of the River-Defying Sect began to step out of their immortal's caves. News had spread over the past few days, and many people knew about the matter of the hostages. In fact, if the sect hadn't specifically forbidden people from visiting Bai Xiaochun to express condolences and bid him farewell, he would have gotten almost no rest.

As of this moment, all of the cultivators in the entire sect had emerged. During the past three days, they had been prohibited from disturbing Bai Xiaochun, but now, they simply had to see him off.

Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei were in the crowd, both of them looking very sad as they flew toward Mount River Defiance.

When Bai Xiaochun arrived at the grand hall, he saw Frigidsect and the other Nascent Soul cultivators there waiting for him. He also saw that he wasn't the first disciple to arrive. Gongsun Wan'er had come a bit earlier, and when she caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, she smiled slightly.

Bai Xiaochun had been informed earlier that Gongsun Wan'er was also to be a hostage. For some reason, he'd always found there to be something strange about her, although he wasn't sure what. When she looked at him, he forced a smile onto his face and walked over to stand next to her. Strangely, she had no Dao Protectors.

Surprised by that, he asked, "Where are your Dao Protectors?"

"I don't need any," she replied with a smile.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and was about to inquire further when Master God-Diviner and Xu Baocai arrived, followed by Big Fatty Zhang and Chen Manyao.

Last of all was the ashen-faced Song Que, who was wearing a very grim expression. Upon arriving, he snorted slightly and then stood next to Master God-Diviner, looking somewhat sulky.

Cultivators were gathering outside of the mountain to say their

farewells to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun could see Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei in the crowd, as well as Hou Yunfei, Third Fatty Hei, and many other familiar faces. None of them could cover up the gloomy expressions on their faces. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun realized that his life truly was bitter sometimes... he always seemed to be saying goodbye to people.

It had been like this back when he had left the village, and back when he had left the Spirit Stream Sect. Now here he was in the River-Defying Sect, and it was the same thing....

Just when he was pondering whether or not to make a short speech like he usually did, an intense pressure suddenly exploded out from the grand hall. At the same time, the door to the hall slowly opened.

The boy appeared, clad in a red robe, his hands clasped behind his back. Although he was not very tall, he seemed grander than heaven and earth, which was, of course, because of the heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy which roiled off of him.

As the pressure of the Deva Realm filled the entire River-Defying Sect with solemn silence, the boy looked at Bai Xiaochun and Gongsun Wan'er, then nodded slightly.

“Since everyone’s here, let’s be off!” He waved his hand up into the sky, causing intense rumbling sounds to echo out, as if the sky itself were being crushed. Then, two illusory hands appeared,

ripping a huge hole into the air itself.

Then, a 30,000-meter-tall giant emerged to hover above in the air.

The giant had a powerful fleshly body, and a savage aura. Although it wasn't quite as impressive as the Blood Ancestor, it was still a completely shocking sight.

As it hovered there, the mountains below almost seemed like toys that it could crush at will.

Gasps could be heard among the River-Defying Sect cultivators, and even Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide. That was especially true after the giant threw his head back and howled, then dropped to its knees and prostrated itself in the direction of Mount River Defiance.

"Master!" it said, its voice deafening as it rolled out in all directions.

Even as everyone in the sect was shaken, the boy flicked his sleeve, causing the visions of Bai Xiaochun and everyone around him to blur. Their bodies were suddenly filled with pain, and they vanished. When they reappeared moments later, they realized that they were looking down at Mount River Defiance....

All of them were now... on the head of the giant!

To be able to teleport people without any spell formations whatsoever was something that Nascent Soul cultivators could only do with great difficulty. However, this young boy had done it with the flick of his sleeve, as if it hadn't taken him any effort at all.

This was the first time that Bai Xiaochun had been shaken in such a way by a deva. Even more shocking was that each hair on the giant's head was like a huge tree, making his head almost like a forest.

Xu Baocai shrieked, and Big Fatty Zhang's face drained of blood. Master God-Diviner was left trembling, and even Song Que started panting a bit. Chen Manyao took things in stride a bit better, whereas Gongsun Wan'er was the only one who didn't seem to have any reaction whatsoever.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he was a true Gold Core cultivator, so although his face paled a bit, he stood there in place, looking down at the River-Defying Sect. Suddenly, he cried out in a loud voice, "I'm leaving... but I'll be back!"

The Deva Realm boy looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a smile, then sat down cross-legged on one of the giant's huge hairs. A moment later, the giant rose to its feet, roared, and leaped back into the hole in the air, vanishing in an instant!

The only thing left behind for the River-Defying Sect cultivators to see were some ripples, and the echoes of Bai Xiaochun's voice.

End of Book 3

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